

Derher

A Chassidisher

א חסידישער דערהער

America Awakened

THE FRIERDIKER REBBE'S VISIT
TO THE UNITED STATES

THE TRUE RULERS

The spiritual power of our Rabbeim
over governmental affairs



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“We all know who we are and what our deficient spiritual standing is. How is it possible for us, in our time, to accomplish the same thing that the great talmidim of Tomchei Temimim in the previous generations did?

“They found themselves in a spiritual oasis, in the presence of their Rebbe. We, on the other hand, are merely sharing stories and lessons from his life.”

It’s a poignant question that the Rebbe asks at a Chof Cheshvan farbrengen, marking the birthday of the Rebbe Rashab.

In detailed clarity, the Rebbe offers insight into how the Rebbe Rashab’s demands of his students are not only relevant today; they are more applicable than ever!

Step inside the Rebbe’s farbrengen—our own spiritual oasis—with this month’s “viewer’s companion” to Chof Mar-Cheshvan 5745.

You’ll find this article in the current edition of Derher magazine, alongside a full lineup of inspiring content:

A heartfelt description of the Frieridker Rebbe’s first visit to the United States and what that did for the Jewish community here.

Stories telling of the heavenly dealings orchestrated by our Rabbeim for the benefit of the Jewish people.

How one contemporary chossid succeeded in putting up *mezuzos* on hundreds of Jewish homes.

And much more.

We trust that you will enjoy your journey with us this month, and most importantly, that the reading will inspire action manifest in our everyday lives.

“By doing our work properly,” the Rebbe concludes in that farbrengen, “we will ensure that ‘no Jew will be left behind’ in *galus*. Every member of this generation will be involved in *hafatzas hamaayanos chutza*. With that we will merit the ultimate *geulah*, now!”

The Editors
זא"ו תשרי ה'תשפ"ג

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“נספת על התודה ברכת מיל טוב, על שיפה בעני חשוב נאה, להיות מון המוכלים את הרבים, להאיר בע”ה את נפשם באור דברי”ק מוח אדמור”ר שליט”א, ולהתעורר עיי”ז לתורה, לעבודה ולומדויות חסידים...
מכתבו יומ”ד לחדש מנ”א תשע”ג”

“In addition to thanks, I would like to add the blessing of ‘mazal tov’ for your merit in taking part in such an important project, bringing merit to the masses, illuminating their souls with the light of the words of my father-in-law, the Rebbe Shlita, inspiring them to Torah, Avoda, & Gemilus Chasidim...”

(THE REBBE’S LETTER, 10 MENACHEM-AV 5703)

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ברכה והצלחה רבה, בכל מכל כל!

Thank you for bringing the teachings of Chassidus & the Rebbe's message to so many around the world, every day. Your impact is felt & inspires action—paving the way for the Geulah now!

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ו"ז חשוון - כ"ז חשוון

Heavenly Haven

THE MABUL WAS SENT BY HASHEM ON 17 CESHVAN, 1656 (א'תרון ז'), TO CLEANSE THE EARTH OF MANKIND'S CORRUPT WAYS. THE ONLY SURVIVORS WERE NOACH, HIS FAMILY, AND MEMBERS OF EVERY LIVING SPECIES, WHO FOUND REFUGE IN A SPECIALLY DESIGNED TEIVAH.

A YEAR LATER, ON 27 CESHVAN, 1657 (א'תרון י"ז), THE GROUND FULLY DRIED AND HASHEM INSTRUCTED NOACH TO LEAVE THE TEIVAH.

COMPILED BY: RABBI MENDEL VOGEL

The word “*teivah*,” the Baal Shem Tov explains, also means “word.” To navigate life’s challenges and avoid being overwhelmed by the floodwaters of material concerns that threaten to engulf us, one must enter the “*teivah*” and immerse oneself in the words of Torah and *tefillah*.

The *teivah* also symbolizes the revelation of *Elokus* we will experience with the coming of Moshiach. Wild and tame animals, predator and prey, coexisted peacefully in the *teivah*. In the days to come we will see a similar harmony, as the *navi* foretells, “The wolf shall dwell with the lamb” (Yeshayahu 11:6).

Based on the above, it would seem that the scenario of “*בָּא-אַתָּה וְכָל-בְּיתְךָ אֶל-הַתְּבָה*” (“Come into the *teivah*, you and your entire household” (Bereishis 7:1)) is the most ideal in terms of spiritual growth. The truth is, however, that the ultimate purpose of entering the *teivah* is for the subsequent

directive “*צִא מִן-הַתְּבָה*”—to “*Leave the teivah*” (Bereishis 8:16):

While the *teivah* represents a safe haven for spiritual growth, its ultimate purpose is not just to provide refuge, but to allow one to emerge empowered. Just as Noach was instructed to enter the *teivah* for protection and preservation, he was later commanded to leave it, signifying a new beginning and a mission to rebuild and impact the world. Similarly, our spiritual growth and refuge in Torah and *tefillah* should lead us to emerge stronger and more committed to achieving the goal of making a *dira b'tachtonim*—a dwelling place for Hashem in this material world.

In order for the entry into the world to be a safe and successful one, it is imperative to begin with the directive “*בָּא*”—to immerse oneself in the words of Torah and *tefillah*. Once a person has properly fulfilled this directive, he must then fulfill the directive “*צִא מִן-הַתְּבָה*.”



This profound dynamic is highlighted in the contrast between Tishrei and Cheshvan: Tishrei is a time when the world is elevated from its natural state of being—it is, so to speak, “within the *teivah*”—and it is in this setting that the *avoda* of Tishrei happens. The ultimate goal, however, is the *avoda* of Cheshvan, when the world reverts to its natural state as “*tachton*.” This is where the work of making a *dira b’tachtonim* happens.

The sequence is crucial, however. For the *avoda* of Cheshvan to be productive, one must first perform the *avoda* of Tishrei. This ensures that even after leaving the Tishrei “*teivah*” and entering the day-to-day of the material world (“Cheshvan life”), one will be able to influence and bring light into the world, including even the light and *giluyim* that—having already been experienced in the *teivah*, as mentioned above—will be seen and felt in the era of Moshiach.



In the story of Noach and the *mabul*, it’s notable that Noach simply had to fulfill what Hashem instructed him—build the *teivah*; feed the animals in the *teivah*—and everything else was taken care of. Those who tried to prevent Noach from entering the *teivah* were unable to do so, all the animals entered the *teivah* on their own, and they all coexisted peacefully within.

Chazal say, “*Ani nivreisi l’shamesh es koni*”—I was created to serve Hashem: When a Yid does what Hashem instructs him to do, everything else that needs to happen will fall into place on its own.

There is a story about the Baal Shem Tov that illustrates this idea: The Baal Shem Tov once needed financial help and

went to a potential donor’s home. He knocked on the door but left before it was answered. The homeowner chased after him, learned of his need, and offered assistance. When asked why he didn’t wait for an answer, the Baal Shem Tov explained that sustenance comes from Hashem, but the Torah says, “Hashem will bless you in all that you *do*.” To fulfill “in all that you do,” he needed to take action, like knocking on the door. Having done his part, he trusted Hashem would do His.

Given that countless stories about the Baal Shem Tov have not reached us, the fact that this one has been preserved and shared with us is itself a testament to its value and the valuable lessons it contains for our own lives.

The lesson is that a Yid can reach a state in which his entire being is focused solely on fulfilling Hashem’s will. If he dedicates himself to this purpose, Hashem takes care of everything else without requiring any additional effort.

Takeaway:

Just as Noach’s *teivah* sheltered not only himself but also his family and representatives of every living creature, the protection and guidance we find in the words of Torah and *tefillah* should extend beyond ourselves. We have a responsibility to bring our families into this spiritual “*teivah*” as well, and, ultimately, to elevate the entire world, which will culminate with the arrival of Moshiach, *b’karov mamash!*

(Adapted from Sichas Motzei Shabbos Parshas Chayei Sara 5740; Shabbos Parshas Noach 5745)



Compiled By: Rabbi Levi Greenberg (OH)

Written By: Rabbi Mendel Jacobs

לזכות החסידיים בצבאות ה'
מנחם מונדל בן חי' מושקא שי'
לרגל יום הולדתו ז' מר-חשוון
אסתר הנ' רחל בת חי' מושקא תחוי'
לרגל יום הולדתה י"א מר-חשוון

שמעון בן חי' מושקא שי'
שיניא בת חי' מושקא תחוי'
אליהו שמאלו בן חי' מושקא שייחי'
צבי הירש אייזיק בן חי' מושקא שייחי'
יה' ר' שיגדלו חי"ל'ים בצבא כ"ק אדמו"ר
מתוך שמחה, בריאות והרחה

Can I Be Like Rivka?

On Young Girls Lighting Shabbos Candles

At the farbrengen of Chof Cheshvan 5735, the Rebbe spoke about a special lesson we can learn from Rivka Imeinu as related in Parshas Chayei Sara: Although she was (according to Rashi) only three years old at the time, she still lit Shabbos candles in the place of Sara Imeinu. This is a lesson for girls in our time that they too should light Shabbos candles as soon as they understand the meaning of this mitzvah, even before becoming Halachic adults.¹

After a portion of this *sicha* was published in the *Algemeiner Journal*, the Rebbe received a letter from Rabbi Meir Blumenfeld, a *gaon* and *rav* in Maplewood, NJ, with several questions.

The Rebbe responded to each of the questions in his holy handwriting on the margins of the original letter; the response was later formulated as a proper letter.²

לפניך האבות ריחות אבל אנו שמן תורך שمر (שהש"ר ע"פ לריח שמןיר) – וידוע ביאור אדמו"ר הזקן בזה שקודם הציווי במת' הי' קיומ המצוות כפי ובמדת הנסיבות של הבנ"א מקיים המצויה – משא"כ לאחר מ"ת מקיים זה **או"א בשילוחות** של נתן התורה בכיכול ובכחות של המצויה. ועוד נקודה בדבר (שקל יותר הקיום) שלalachري(ה)י' מעשה אבות (נעשה ע"ז סימן וסיווע לבנים).

[ב. רבקה ע"ה הדלקה אחר הנשואין]

מחלוקת בזה. ואדרבה רוב הדעות שה' קודם לנישואין וכמפורש בפדר"א פט"ז ועוד (הובאו בთו"ש) זהה פשוטו של מקרה ולא העיר רשי"י אחרית. וק"ל. ולהעיר גם להדיעה **דמעשה ההדלקה** הי' לאחרי הנישואין – אין זה מכריח **כל** לאפושי פלוגתא ולומר דפליג' ג"כ בונגע **לחובב** ההדלקה. ועוד ג"ז עיקר – גם לאחרי הנישואין בהיותה (לפרשי"י ועוד) בת ג"ש – אין ההדלקה אלא עניין דחינון.

בمعنى... [למכתב כת"ר מיום ועש"ק פ' חי' שרה],
מןחר הנני לענות כיון שתקותי חזקה שגם כת"ר ניצל כל השפעתו
שניתנה לו בהשחח"פ – להפצת הענין דהה"ג ע"י כל נשי ובנות
ישראל מתחל מגיל חינוך, וכCMDובר בארכוה ע"ד גודל חשיבות
הענין וכוכ' וכוכ' בכו"כ הזרמוויות, ובודאי לדוכותי' דכת"ר א"צ
בכתיבת העד"ז כ"א רק להעתיק מוח"ל דאין מזרין אלא למזרזין
וכל עש"ק עולם (בזמןן דזמן) מלא הוא.

וע"ס מכ' כת"ר:

[א. איך אפשר להשווות בכלל להאמחות נערות ותנוקות להדלק
נרות של שבת?]
תケנו תקנה והנהגו מנהג ופשט הדבר בכל ישראל (בל' הרמב"ם
ה' ממורים רפ"ב) **שכאו"א** יאמר אחרי אמריתת תהלים וbungog
לעצמם שתהא אמריתו כאילו אמרם דוד מלך ישראל בעצמו. יתרה
מזה בונגע לנדו"ד אמרץ"ל (מאמר נפלא ביוטר): כל המצוות שעשו

רב מאיר בלומעןפֿעלְדּ RABBI MEYER BLUMENFELD

RABBI MEYER BLUMENFELD

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Maplewood, New Jersey 07040
(201) 761-4694

מאות"ל למלמדין מורבקה דאי משיאין האשה אלא מדעתה (ב"ד פ"ס יב והובא גם בפרש"י עה"ת – אינו עניין לכאן ואין סתירה مكانן – ואדרבה הוא כ"ב ק"ז באם בוגרע א) לסתנה (ב) להסתכם בכללות העניין קודם הקידושין בפועל צ"ל לדעתה עאכו"כ כו'. וראה ג"כ רשי"ג על הר"י ר"פ האיש מקדש.

בנוגע דין למדין מלפני מ"ת כו' – כבר הארכו בזה בכ"כ
[מקומות וראות אנטז'יק' תלמודית בערכו. ו'ש"ג].

בנוגע דאין למדין מלפני מ"ת כו' – כבר הארכו בזה בכ"כ [מקומות וראה אנטזיך' תלמודית בערכו. ו"ג].

ובכבוד ובברכה.

In response... [to your honor's letter from Erev Shabbos Kodesh Parshas Chayei Sara]:

I hasten to respond, for I strongly hope that you too will utilize the influence accorded to you by Hashem's providence, to disseminate the idea that **all** Jewish women and girls, beginning at the age of *chinuch*, should light [Shabbos] candles. The great importance of this [matter] etc. etc. was discussed at length on many occasions. Of course, to someone of your stature, there is no need to write [letters] about this; only to cite the words of *Chazal*—we only encourage those who are already eager. Every Erev Shabbos [that goes by] is an entire world (in the time sense). [I.e. it is

important to work on this campaign immediately, for every opportunity wasted is an incalculable loss.]

[As to your questions, I will answer them] in the order of your letter:

[1. How can you compare young girls and toddlers to the *Imahos* [the Matriarchs of our nation] that they too should light Shabbos candles?]

An ordinance has been established and a custom instituted... and the practice has spread throughout the Jewish people ([to borrow] the term used by the Rambam in Hilchos Mamrim, beginning of ch. 2³) that **each and every one** should [pray], after reciting Tehillim, **for themselves**, “May [my] recital be as if recited by Dovid Melech Yisroel himself.”

Furthermore, and specifically with regard to **our subject at hand**, *Chazal* said (a most incredible statement): All the *mitzvos* performed by our Forefathers were [merely] the “fragrance” [i.e. a smell without a substance], however our [performance of *mitzvos*] are “your name is oil poured forth” [i.e. our deeds are the real thing] (Shir Hashirim Rabba on the *possuk* “*L'rei'ach sh'manecha*”). The Alter Rebbe’s explanation on this is well known: Before [Hashem] commanded us at Matan Torah [to perform them], fulfillment of the *mitzvos* [only] measured as far as the power of **the human being** fulfilling the *mitzvah* [could reach]. However, after Matan Torah, **each and every person** fulfills the *mitzvos* **on behalf** of the Giver of the Torah, so-to-speak, with the power of **the One Who commanded** [us to do these *mitzvos*—Hashem Himself].

Additionally: Once our ancestors [blazed the trail with their own] actions, they [i.e. the actions] show (and grant the assistance to) their descendants [to follow in their ways]. (For this reason, it is easier to fulfill [these *mitzvos*].)⁴

[2. Rivka [only] lit candles after getting married. [How then is the Rebbe advocating even for unmarried girls to do so?]

This is the subject of a dispute [among the Torah’s commentators]. On the contrary, most opinions maintain that [her lighting candles] was before her marriage, as explicitly stated in Pirkei D'Rebbi Eliezer ch. 16 and other sources (cited in Torah Shleima). This is the basic meaning of the *possuk*, and Rashi does not comment otherwise. This is easy to understand.

It should be noted that even according to the opinion **that the act** of lighting candles happened after getting married, it doesn’t **at all** necessitate [us] to magnify the difference of opinion and say that they argue [not only about her *actions* but also] about **the obligation** to light the candles [at a

young age] as well.

Another essential point: Even after she got married, being [only] three years old at the time (according to Rashi and others), the whole premise of her lighting candles was only an act of *chinuch*.⁵

[You may want to ask from what] *Chazal* say, that we learn from [the story of] Rivka that one may not marry off a girl without her consent.⁶ (Bereishis Rabba 60:12, cited also in Rashi on the *possuk*).

This is not applicable to our subject,⁷ and does not contradict what we’re saying.

On the contrary: [we learn from Rivka’s story by applying the logic of] *kal v'chomer*: If [Rivka, as] a minor, when it came to agreeing to the general idea [of this *shidduch*] even before the actual marriage, we needed her consent, certainly [when it comes to an adult woman, and when we’re speaking about *actual marriage*, we must have the woman’s consent].

See also Rashi on the Rif, beginning of Perek Ha’ish Mekadesh.⁸

As to [the question that] we cannot learn [halacha] from occurrences before Matan Torah etc.: This has already been discussed at length in many [sources]. [See Encyclopedia Talmudis in this entry, where this issue is addressed].

There is much more to say about all of the above.
With esteem and blessings.⁹

1. Published in Likkutei Sichos vol. 15, pp. 163–173.

2. Published in Igros Kodesh vol. 30, pp. 24–27.

3. There the Rambam writes that “When a Beis-Din issued a decree, instituted an edict, or established a custom and this practice spread throughout the Jewish people,” it cannot easily be undone.

4. I.e. the question as to how we can compare to our ancestors is not valid, since their fulfillment of the same *mitzvos* is precisely what gives us the power to emulate their ways.

5. I.e. even if she was married, as a minor she was not obligated to light candles but did so nonetheless. We can certainly deduce from her conduct that girls today can light as well, even if they aren’t yet obligated.

6. The question is: *Chazal* learn from the fact that Rivka was asked before leaving Charan whether or not she wanted to go along, that one must not marry off a girl without her consent. This seems to imply that she was married off earlier, even before leaving Charan. Hence, when she lit Shabbos candles in Sara’s tent, she was already married—which contradicts the Rebbe’s premise that she lit even before marriage.

7. The way the Rebbe explains this *Chazal*, Rivka was asked whether or not she agreed to the general idea of the *shidduch*, even though she would not be married until after traveling to Yitzchok later on.

8. Kiddushin 16b (Rif pages). Rashi applies the *possuk* about Rivka to the halacha that one should not accept *kiddushin* on behalf of his daughter while she is a minor.

9. Special thanks to Rabbi Sholom Ber Levine and Rabbi Leima Wilhelm for their assistance in preparing this article.

טור 'לעבן מיטן רבי' ז' הקדש לזכרון
ולעלוי נשמתו
ר' שמואלב"ר יהושע אליהו ז"ל
ואשתו מרת שרה ע"ה בת ר'
יקוטיאל מורת לאה הי"ד
ת' נצ'ב'ה'
~~
ע"י בנים
ר' יקותיאל יהודה
וזוגתו מרת פועל לאה ומשפחתם
שיחון
רוהר



A Month of Chassidus

We continue the wondrous story of the
“Year of Wonders”—Cheshvan 5751.

COMPILED BY: **RABBI YANKY BELL**

WRITTEN BY: **RABBI MENDEL JACOBS**

The Women's Part

Each Shabbos, the Rebbe held an afternoon farbren- gen, sharing words of Torah and important lessons for the week ahead.

On Shabbos Parshas Noach, 1 Cheshvan, the Rebbe addressed Jewish women and girls, explaining that they too must be involved in spreading Yiddishkeit and Chassidus. “The way they approach the role of transforming the world is different than that of men,” the Rebbe added. While men are primarily the ones who go out into the world with force, based on the *possuk* of “*V'chivshuha*” (conquer the world) which applies primarily to men, women’s role in transforming the world is done with a more inward approach. This is not to say that women are any less effective. On the contrary; from within her own home, a woman has the power to inspire and transform for the better.

Tangentially, the Rebbe mentioned that there may be a halachic problem for women to ride in a male-driven taxi (due to issues of *tznius*, *yichud*, and the like). Since today, many women have driver’s licenses, they should wait until they can get a taxi driven by a fellow woman.

[After Shabbos, the Rebbe was asked how should women actually go about this issue, and the Rebbe replied: “*פסק דין שיר לרבנים פוסק דין, ואני באתי ריק לעורר שיש מקום לשאלת רב פוסק דין.*”]

“Halachic rulings are the domain of *rabbanim* who regularly offer halachic rulings. My intent was only to point out that this is a question that must be addressed by a *rav* who regularly offers halachic rulings.”]

Towards the end of the farbren- gen the Rebbe distributed bottles of *mashke* to people hosting events in the coming week. Some 27 individuals approached, and the Rebbe poured from each of the bottles into his own cup, then back into the bottles, before giving out each of the bottles.

Siyum HaRambam

The farbren- gen of Shabbos Parshas Lech Lecha, 8 Cheshvan, was dedicated almost entirely to the seventh Siyum HaRambam, which occurred on that day. The Rebbe explained that the *siyum* is a time for immense joy, both for those who completed the entire Rambam, and for others as well. The Rebbe also delivered a deep *hadran* on Rambam, connecting the conclusion of the Rambam’s Mishneh Torah with the number seven—the current concluding cycle—and the number eight—the cycle which would immediately begin.

Towards the end of the farbren- gen, just before distributing the *mashke*, the Rebbe called upon everyone to get involved in the *Mivtzoim*.

“You know of a Yid who is in his office on Sunday,” the Rebbe said. “You have off on Sunday; go over there and talk to him about putting on *tefillin*!”

You may prefer to stay home, the Rebbe said, where you can learn Torah, even *pnimiyus haTorah*, with a *gesh-mak*, with a *niggun*, and out loud. But you need to go out there and help this fellow Yid! He’s in a spiritually dangerous situation, and it’s up to you to go there and put *tefillin* on with him.

On Shabbos Parshas Vayera, 15 Cheshvan, the Rebbe dedicated much of the *sichos* to discussing the upcoming 130th birthday of the Rebbe Rashab. The Rebbe spoke about the Chassidus of the Rebbe Rashab as a source of practical inspiration. The Rebbe Rashab is known as the Rambam of Chassidus—much like the Rambam’s *sefer* is written with practical takeaways in mind.

The Rebbe concluded with the hope that we see the fulfillment of the Rebbe Rashab’s request when he was a young child, “Why doesn’t Hashem reveal Himself to me?” with the coming of Moshiach. Then we will see Elokus, and we’ll see the holy faces of our Rabbeim as they deliver Chassidus. And we will prepare ourselves, with the help of our Rabbeim, to hear Chassidus from each of our Rabbeim this coming Thursday, Chof Mar-Cheshvan!

New Chassidus

On Thursday, Chof Cheshvan, everyone found out that the Rebbe was going to distribute a special edition of the Rebbe Rashab’s “*Kuntres Eitz Hachaim*” later that evening.

At 1:25 p.m., the Rebbe left for the Ohel holding a copy of the recently discovered handwritten *maamar* from the Rebbe Rashab, “*Anochi Magen Lach—5678*.”

Upon the Rebbe’s return from the Ohel at 5:50 p.m., the shul at 770 was full beyond capacity with people who had heard about the pleasant surprise. After davening *Mincha* and *Maariv*, the Rebbe began distributing the *kuntres* to men, women, and children.

This new edition of *Kuntres Eitz Hachaim* bore a bright yellow cover, with the words “Special edition—Chof Mar-Cheshvan 5751” added at the bottom.

After about an hour, the first shipment of *kuntrei-sim* was all given out, and the second shipment was still on its way from the printer in New Jersey. The Rebbe stood and waited for about three minutes, his eyes fixed on the window of the women’s section where the boxes would be delivered, until the new boxes arrived, and the



THE REBBE DISTRIBUTES THE MAAMAR "ANOCHI MAGEN LACH—5678."

distribution continued on for another two hours.

On his way out of shul, the Rebbe continued distributing to several latecomers who had managed to make it at the last minute, then returned to his room.

Already while the Rebbe was still distributing the *kuntres*, groups of Chassidim formed to immediately begin studying the new Chassidus they had received from the Rebbe. Later that evening a large farbrengen was held at 770, where the elder Chassidim and *mashpi'im* discussed how privileged we are to have received this *kuntres* from the Rebbe's holy hand, and they encouraged everyone to study it diligently.

More Chassidus

On the following Shabbos, 22 Cheshvan, the Rebbe delivered a *maamar kein sicha* on the possuk "Vayihyu Chayeis Sara," quite an unusual occurrence for this period.

Speaking again about the Rebbe Rashab, the Rebbe mentioned the *Kuntres Eitz Hachaim* which he had distributed to everyone two days prior (see above). The purpose of the distribution, the Rebbe said, was obviously that people should learn from the *kuntres* and fulfill what it says.

Then the Rebbe divulged a very exciting thing to come:

Being that a never-before-seen *maamar* from the Rebbe Rashab was recently discovered, he was going to distribute a copy of this *maamar* to everyone at the beginning of the next week!

On Monday, 24 Cheshvan, it was announced that the Rebbe would distribute the second *kuntres* that evening.



THE TWO
KUNTREISIM
DISTRIBUTED
BY THE REBBE
IN CONNECTION
WITH 20
CHESHVAN 5751.

This time, due to the advance notice that the Rebbe had given on Shabbos, an even larger crowd gathered to receive the *kuntres* from the Rebbe. The distribution lasted more than three hours, as the Rebbe handed out more than seven thousand *kuntreisim* to men, women, and children.

Kinus Hashluchim

A special occurrence this month in the Rebbe's presence is the annual Kinus Hashluchim, which coincides with Shabbos Mevorach Kislev. Close to 800 shluchim from all around the world participated this year, the biggest turnout yet for a Kinus.

On Thursday, 27 Cheshvan, when the Rebbe entered the shul for Mincha and Maariv, his holy face radiated a special joy at seeing the many shluchim present.

Shabbos was special and uplifting. When the Rebbe entered the farbrengen on Shabbos afternoon, the shul was overly crowded. But the Rebbe's voice was heard throughout the room as everyone listened attentively.

The Rebbe spoke about the Kinus Hashluchim "Ha'olami," which, as its name suggests, impacts the entire world. Detailing the various levels and aspects of shlichus, the Rebbe drew pertinent lessons for everyone in how to further our shlichus here in this world and finally bring Moshiach.

Toward the end of farbrengen, the Rebbe spoke about publishing a "Sefer Hashluchim" which would contain photographs of all the families of shluchim around the world, even the very young children. "When a child sees their photograph in the *sefer*," the Rebbe explained, "they will remember that they, too, are a shliach, and this will encourage them to follow in the footsteps of

their parents..."

In an attempt to speed up the process, the Rebbe said that the publishers should not worry about funding the project, since all the money will be taken care of right here (i.e. from the Rebbe's office).

After this *sicha*, the crowd sang a joyous Simchas Torah *niggun*, and the Rebbe waved his hands so vigorously in all directions that the crowd went wild!

At the end of the farbrengen the Rebbe distributed bottles of *mashke* as usual, only that this time there were 50(!) bottles due to the high volume of shluchim and guests. The last one to receive a bottle was Reb Meir Harlig, who then proceeded to invite everyone to the grand Rosh Chodesh Kislev celebration at 770, marking 13 years since the Rebbe's miraculous recovery from a heart attack.

On Motzei Shabbos, Leil Rosh Chodesh Kislev, the Rebbe davened Maariv in the big shul (instead of the small *zal*) due to the large crowd. After Havdala, one of the shluchim called out loud, "Yechi adoneinu moreinu v'rabeinu," and everyone responded Yechi with a whole heart. The crowd spontaneously broke out singing the Rosh Chodesh Kislev *niggun*, and the Rebbe encouraged the singing as he left the shul, while scores of Chassidim remained behind, singing and dancing with great joy.

Later that night, Reb Meir Harlig's grand farbrengen took place at 770, joined by Chassidim and shluchim and lasting into the wee hours of the morning.

Dollars

Each Sunday, a growing crowd of people visits 770 to meet the Rebbe and receive his *bracha* and a dollar for *tzedakah*.



MOMENTS FROM THE INTERNATIONAL KINUS HASHLUCHIM 5751.



LIBRARY OF AGUDAS CHASIDIM CHABAD

In fact, due to the large number of people, it was decided to install an additional door in the small *zal* at 770, so that the crowds of visitors wouldn't disturb the *bochurim*'s learning. At the beginning of Cheshvan, construction of this door was completed.

Senator of Love

On Sunday, 2 Cheshvan, the Rebbe was visited by Senator Alfonse D'Amato, who represented the state of New York in the US Senate.

The Rebbe told him, "You certainly know that 'Amato' means that you are permeated with love [in Italian], and the same is true about 'Lubavitch' which also means love." The Senator thanked the Rebbe for the strength and the great wisdom that he disseminates. "I hate to think what this area would look like without your great movement and without the strength that you give," he said.

The Rebbe corrected him: "Don't think about such tragic things!"

The Senator responded: "Then let me say that we are fortunate to have you."

The Rebbe agreed: "That is a better context."

The Senator expressed his wish to continue working with the Rebbe for the greater good, and the Rebbe added that this must not only continue, but go from strength to strength, "permeated with love for all the people around you!"

The Senator then presented one of his assistants, whom he introduced as "a good Jew." The Rebbe said, "I am not afraid to meet with non-Jews as well. From time to time, I meet with them, and I have no problem."

A woman came by with her daughter and told the Rebbe that her daughter was unable to speak. The Rebbe said, "Hashem should bless you to be able to speak and say the *bracha* on the candles. Does she light Shabbos candles?" The mother said that she does, but she doesn't say the *bracha*. "Next week," the Rebbe said, "you should light first, say the *bracha*, and try to have her repeat after you."

On Sunday, 9 Cheshvan, the Rebbe was visited by a doctor, and the Rebbe gave him an extra dollar for all his patients. Then the Rebbe added with a smile, "I'm not trying to compete with you. On the contrary, I'm giving you this dollar so you can give it to tzedakah on their behalf."

Why Make Conditions?

On Sunday, 16 Cheshvan, a woman came to the Rebbe saying that she had traveled from Eretz Yisroel specifically to ask for the Rebbe's *bracha* for children. The Rebbe gave her an additional dollar for her husband, then another, "to give to tzedakah when the child is born."

The woman then asked for an additional *bracha*, stating a specific time frame for its fulfillment, and the Rebbe said, "Why



THE NEW EXIT INSTALLED IN THE SMALL ZAL AT 770.



A LARGE CROWD WAITS TO SEE THE REBBE DURING SUNDAY DOLLARS, 9 CHESHVAN 5751.



THE REBBE ENTERS THE SHUL FOR SHACHARIS, CHESHVAN 5751.



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must you make conditions with Hashem? Let it happen earlier than that!"

The woman said, "May it happen soon!" and the Rebbe replied, "Indeed, 'soon' is better."

The Rebbe asked a *bochur* who had recently returned from Eretz Yisroel if he had any news about a shidduch. The *bochur* replied that he'll write a letter to the Rebbe about it, and the Rebbe said, "I don't mean that you should write me letters. I want you to send me a wedding invitation!"

Jewish Survival

On Sunday, 23 Cheshvan, an individual came to the Rebbe saying that his wife was very ill; she'd already undergone several operations, and she needs a big *bracha*.

The Rebbe replied: "Give this [dollar] to tzedakah for her. This [additional dollar] is for you to check the mezuzah of her room. Is she at home or in the hospital?" The man responded that she was in the hospital.

The Rebbe: "Bring her a mezuzah and place it in her night table. The doctors allow this."

Professor Yirmiya Branover introduced a couple from Switzerland to the Rebbe, saying that they publish a newspaper called "Shalom" in French and German. The Rebbe said, "May Hashem bless you to be successful in [your publishing in] French, English, and Russian."

The couple looked confused for a moment, and the

professor explained, "Yes, we were in middle of discussing a Russian edition as well." The Rebbe agreed and gave them an additional dollar "for the success of the journal."

The man then asked the Rebbe, "Will there be a split within the Jewish people due to the Reform movement?" The Rebbe replied: "No. The Jewish people survived 1900 years of exile, and they will also survive the Reform."

We Shouldn't Go There

Several other notable events occurred throughout the month.

Outside the Rebbe's room on Thursday morning, 13 Cheshvan, the Rebbe met with Reb Dovid Nachshon and Reb Avi Taub, who came to give the Rebbe the keys to two newly renovated *Ohalim* in Russia: at the resting places of the Baal Shem Tov and Reb Boruch, the Alter Rebbe's father.

The Rebbe told them:

"A big *yasher koach!* This is a tremendous *zechus* and a great thing. Very soon we will greet Moshiach, and there will be '*Hakitzu v'r'anenu shochnei afar*' (*techiyas ham-eisim*), then we won't need to go there anymore. *Yasher koach.* Have safe travels, good news, and much success."

Siyum Sefer Torah

On Wednesday, 19 Cheshvan, the Kotlarsky family dedicated a new Sefer Torah in memory of Mrs. Golda

Kotlarsky, donated to the Rebbe's shul at 770. The procession paraded through the streets of Crown Heights to 770, where the Sefer Torah was placed in its new home.

When the Rebbe came downstairs for Mincha, a special joy radiated from his holy face, and he encouraged the singing with much enthusiasm.

A *seudas mitzvah* was later held at the home of Mrs. Kotlarsky's son, Reb Moshe Kotlarsky.

The next morning, the new Sefer Torah was used in the Rebbe's *minyan* for *krias haTorah*. After the reading, as the new Sefer was being placed in the *aron kodesh*, the crowd sang "Sisu V'simchu B'simchas Torah," and the Rebbe encouraged the singing while looking at members of the Kotlarsky family, especially the father, Reb Tzvi Yosef.

Chassanim

On Tuesday, 25 Cheshvan, two *chassanim* came to receive the siddur from the Rebbe before their weddings.

At first, the Rebbe asked them which wedding would take place earlier, but they said that both weddings were scheduled for the same day.

The Rebbe asked: "At the same time of day?" but they weren't sure what to answer.

The Rebbe continued: "Is either one of you a Kohen or a Levi?" But neither of them was.

The Rebbe asked: "What are your names?" and one of them responded with his last name. "I mean your first name," the Rebbe said. The first *chassan* said his name is Shmuel, and the other said "Chaim Shaul."

The Rebbe responded, "Chaim Shaul!" handing him the siddur [the letter Ches comes before Shin in alphabetical order].

Then the Rebbe blessed each of the *chassanim*: "May you successfully request all good things. May it be in a good and auspicious hour," while handing them each a nickel for tzedakah.

Your Answer is Right There!

Some of the written responses given by the Rebbe this month:

Rabbi Yaakov Shmuelovitz of Chabad Beit Shaan wrote to the Rebbe about the difficult financial situation of his Chabad house, ending his letter with "מִן-אֵין יָבָא עֹזֶר"—from where will my help come?

The Rebbe replied:

א. גענעה בתהילים על אתר. ב. בדיקת התפלין והמצוות אזכיר עה"צ.



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MR. MICHAEL SCHARF AND HIS TWO SONS WITH THE REBBE.

1. You were already answered in Tehillim in that very *possuk* [i.e. my help will come from Hashem].
2. Check your tefillin and *mezuzos*. I will mention this at the Ohel.



On Sunday, 9 Cheshvan, Mr. Moshe Yaakov (Michael) Scharf came to the Rebbe at dollars with his two sons, who gave the Rebbe tzedakah pushkas filled with coins.

Two days later, the Rebbe wrote to Mr. Scharf:

נשחתתי במיוחד מהרגש דיו"ח שחייו שהי' ויכר על פניהם בעת
שמסרו לי הnickels והדימס דצדקה. אזכיר עה"צ.

I was especially touched by the affection noticeable on the faces of your children, *sheyichyu*, when they gave me the nickels and dimes for tzedakah. I will mention this at the Ohel.



An individual wrote to the Rebbe asking for a bracha for success in his business, and the Rebbe replied:

פתיחת החנות בשבת וו"ט מהרסת את ההכנסה כمفורסם. אזכיר
עה"צ.

Having a store open on Shabbos and Yom Tov **destroys** any profit, as is well known. I will mention this at the Ohel.



An individual wrote to the Rebbe that this month marks 40 years since the first time he saw the Rebbe, and the Rebbe replied:

מנחגי יום הולדתך. אזכיר עה"צ.

[Observe] the customary conduct for a birthday. I will mention this at the Ohel.¹

1. See Hayom Yom 30 Shevat: Many Chassidim considered the day they first came to Lubavitch as their birthday.

THE TRUE RULERS

The spiritual power of our Rabbeim
over governmental affairs

By: Rabbi Sholom Posner

Special thanks to Mendel Teitelbaum for his
assistance in the research of this article.

לזכות
הרה"ת שלום דוב בער שיחי' שוחאת
לרגל יום הולדתו י"ז מרחשון
לשנת הצלחה בג"ר



Heads of state and politicians are the apparent world leaders. Their decisions have a profound influence, and they are respected, revered, and feared.

Yet, the Gemara¹ teaches that “The Rabbanan” are the true kings. By virtue of their unity with Hashem, they have the power to alter the order of the world.² When faced with such kings, all other would-be powers dissolve entirely.

There have been many episodes in which our Rabbeim, through their holy words and actions, compromised the perceived powers in the world, demonstrating who is the true King of the world.

THE CANTONISTS' TYRANT

NIKOLAI I

Nikolai (Nicholas) I of Russia (1796–1855) is remembered infamously in the annals of Jewish history. After the death of his older brother Alexander in 1825, Nikolai took the throne. He was a powerful and unrelenting king who ruled with an iron fist. The Jews in particular were often targets of his tyranny. His ministers and advisors were of similar disposition, which did not make things any better for the Jews under his reign.

Among his infamous edicts was the decree of the Cantonists, under which Jewish communities were required to provide a quota of young Jewish boys for army conscription. The explicit goal of this decree was to separate the young conscripts from their families and communities, making them vulnerable to forced conversion.

From his earliest years, and continuing throughout his reign until his death, our Rebbeim worked to mitigate his power and alleviate the suffering of the Yidden.

Nikolai's unexpected death, shortly before Purim 5615 (1855), sparked controversial conspiracy theories. In fact, the exact circumstances of his demise are still debated to this day. However, there is another cause of death that finds mention only in the tradition of Chassidim.



A Fracture In The Royal Scepter

In the yard of a government facility in Peterburg, young Nikolai, prince of Russia, played with another child from a royal family. Though peculiar, regulars in the capital were used to the sight of Nikolai wielding his baton in hand, ready to strike at all times. Even at a tender age, he displayed vicious and cruel tendencies.

Noticing a contingent of officers returning a prisoner

to his cell from the interrogation offices, Nikolai lunged at the inmate as if to strike him—hoping to make him flinch.³ The prisoner turned his stern gaze toward the young prince. Nikolai was thrown off balance by the fearless reaction. He dropped his baton, lowered his eyes, and hung his head. Crying in fear, he told his tutor that his heart had grown faint within him due to the terrifying gaze of that prisoner.

The prisoner whose gaze had such an impact on Nikolai's assumed superiority was the Alter Rebbe—this episode occurring during the last days of his



JEWISH CANTONIST SOLDIERS.

internment leading up to the miracle of Yud-Tes Kislev.

Nearly three decades later, Nikolai was crowned emperor of the Russian Empire. His predecessor had been tolerant, at times even favorable, to the Jews, but Nikolai's anti-semitism left little room for doubt as to his intentions for the Jews of Russia.

On his coronation day, the Tzemach Tzedek remarked, "The Alter Rebbe could accomplish with his vision what one of his holy peers could through speech. And his accomplishment was on a yet higher plane, as with the superiority of vision over speech."

It was heavenly orchestrated, the Friediker Rebbe explained, that Nikolai would be playing in precisely the courtyard through which the Alter Rebbe would be led. When the Alter Rebbe placed his holy gaze on Nikolai, terrifying him to the extent that he lost his baton, he created a fracture in the evil spirit of the future Czar. The Alter Rebbe "broke the scepter"—or in this case baton—of Nikolai's rule. Without his intervention, we could not have survived—G-d forbid—the decrees Nikolai would have enacted against us.⁴

A Grip On The Capital

Upon being crowned, Nikolai wasted no time in beginning his intense persecution of the Jews. His reign was marked by countless decrees targeting the Jews spiritually as well as physically.

CROWNING THE "KINGS" ON ROSH HASHANA

The Rabbeim spoke little, if at all, on the first night of Rosh Hashanah, because of the solemnity of that time. In contrast, the Tzemach Tzedek would regularly use that time to speak about politics, directing the course of the "earthly kingdom" in that coming year. However, on a number of occasions, other Rabbeim acted in the same, or similar, fashion.

One year the Rebbe Maharash, who otherwise never engaged in conversation on the first night of Rosh Hashanah, remarked, "*Machshava* is good and *dibbur* is certainly good. Today that there is both, let him (referring to an anti-semitic governor) die already." The governor immediately fell ill.⁹

At the conclusion of Rosh Hashanah 5743, the Rebbe said at the farbrengen that with regard to Torah and *mitzvos* we pay no heed to the government in power. On the contrary, an order ("sedarim") is made in kingdoms throughout the world for the good of the Yidden—as with the Tzemach Tzedek who made "sedarim" in the *hanhagas hamalchus*.

Weeks later, Leonid Brezhnev, leader of the Soviet Union, died. He was succeeded by Yuri Andropov under whose leadership a positive shift began in the Soviet approach to religion.

The following year, the Rebbe again made mention of this story of the Tzemach Tzedek. In the course of that year Andropov died and, with time, was succeeded by Mikhail Gorbachev who introduced serious liberal reforms in the USSR.¹⁰

Throughout most of Nikolai's rule, the Tzemach Tzedek served as *nossi* and fought valiantly to defend the Yidden and Yiddishkeit. The *tzaros* of the Yidden in that era and the Tzemach Tzedek's efforts to combat them—both through overt as well as clandestine activities—are fascinating stories in their own right.⁵ But aside from the

Tzemach Tzedek's "natural" resources, he also made use of his access to supernatural channels to better the lives of the Russian Yidden.

Notably, at the *seudos* of Rosh Hashana, the Tzemach Tzedek would—in the words of his son, the Maharil—"practice ownership in Peterburg." Or as the Rebbe

SPEECH THROUGH THE MOUTH OF ANOTHER

The Rebbe Maharash once told the Rebbe Rashab about one of the extraordinary ways the Tzemach Tzedek would affect governmental affairs:

When communal affairs were dire, the Tzemach Tzedek would utilize his powers of vision, hearing, and speech, in a way reminiscent of the Baal Shem Tov. He could see hundreds of miles away and eavesdrop on discussions in the capital. When necessary, he spoke from his location and ensured that someone "on the ground" would feel compelled to articulate the same.

During the winter of 5619, there was an urgent matter to take care of in Peterburg, but due to the bitter cold, the Tzemach Tzedek was unable to travel. Instead, he sent Reb Aharon Belinitzer—a shrewd, courageous individual capable of holding conversation with government officials, and an impressive *lamdan*—as his agent.

Before Reb Aharon departed, the Tzemach Tzedek advised him that whenever a debate arose, he should think deeply, make a decision, and "*yamid al dato*" (understood to mean—he *should* stand firm by his opinion).

Some time after Reb Aharon's journey, the Tzemach Tzedek remarked, "A pity on Aharon, he's stuck in a dilemma and doesn't know what to do." This was perplexing, as a recent letter from Reb Aharon had mentioned no dilemma. Shortly thereafter the Tzemach Tzedek continued, "Aharon is a *bar daas*, he is *maamid al dato*, good good."

The Rebbe Maharash then understood the meaning of the instruction "*viyamid al dato*": he *will* stand by the Rebbe's opinion.¹¹

Reb Shmuel Levitin related another story which seems to demonstrate this same supernatural faculty:

In 5603, the Russian Government convened the "Asifas Harabbanim," a conference intended to address their issues with Jewish life and impose reforms. Four delegates were invited to represent the Jewish factions in Russia (Chassidim, Misnagdim, the business class, and Maskilim). The Tzemach Tzedek represented the Chassidim and Reb Itzele Volozhiner represented the Misnagdim, the two fighting together on behalf of authentic Yiddishkeit.

At one point, the discussion turned to an offensive Midrash, which the officials pointed to as reason for censorship and banning of *seforim*: The Mechilta¹² reads, "*Tov shebagoyim harog*" (The finest of *goyim*, you should kill).¹³ The Tzemach Tzedek deferred the question to Reb Itzele for explanation.

A novel explanation suddenly flashed into Reb Itzele's mind. He explained that the original version of the Midrash had read, "*Tov shebagoyim katol*"—"*Katol*," referring to the Catholics, being described as the best of the nations. A copyist, mistaking it for the Aramaic word "*katol*" (to kill), replaced it with "*harog*" to be consistent with the Hebrew.

When the government officials asked for proof, the Tzemach Tzedek directed them to a certain manuscript in the imperial library, where indeed the Midrash appeared with the word "*katol*."

Reb Itzele later related that this answer was not his own, the Tzemach Tzedek had surely planted it in his mind. He searched extensively afterward, but never again found a version of the Midrash that read *katol*. He concluded that not only the answer, but even the existence of the manuscript, had been a miracle performed by the Tzemach Tzedek.¹⁴

Maharash put it, “He prods the wagon” (in the direction he desires). The Tzemach Tzedek would speak of governmental matters—ministers and the like—and his words would manifest in the political reality of the coming year. One example is the Lilienthal saga.

In the early 5600’s the Maskilim were aggressively campaigning their cause of general education. Led by Dr. Menachem (Max) Lilienthal⁶ from Munich, they persuaded Nikolai’s government to reform the Cheder system. After establishing Haskalah-style schools throughout the Russian Empire, they worked toward forcibly implementing their curriculum in the *chadarim* as well.

One Rosh Hashanah⁷ while Lilienthal was in the midst of implementing his scheme, he was suddenly betrayed. In a strange turn of events, the Russian government, who had held Lilienthal in high regard, accepted a libel accusing him of major theft.

Based on Lilienthal’s character, this libel was entirely unrealistic. However, as a result of the Tzemach Tzedek’s davening and *Seuda*-conversation, the government was inclined to believe it.

He was forced to escape Russia by sneaking across the border, thus halting his detrimental activities. He eventually came to America, where he settled in Cincinnati and founded the Reform seminary there.⁸

Hapodeinu Miyad Melachim

The Tzemach Tzedek’s activism on behalf of Russian Jewry bothered some officials in the government. One minister in particular, by the name of Ignatayev, would regularly create libels about the Tzemach Tzedek. These reports would be presented directly to the Czar, painting in his mind a bad image of the Tzemach Tzedek.

At the height of the Crimean War, the Tzemach Tzedek donated a sum of one-hundred rubles toward the war effort. Nikolai ordered his donation rejected and returned. He ominously remarked, “When I’m finished with the war, I will deal with the matter of what to do with Rabbi Schneerson.”

One night, the Chassidim became aware that the Tzemach Tzedek was davening with extraordinary fire and *dveikus*, unusual for an ordinary Maariv. Understanding that something deeper was transpiring, they created a peephole in the Tzemach Tzedek’s door through which they could better see and hear.

Standing in a circled off area, the Tzemach Tzedek was



“THE WINTER PALACE,” THE OFFICIAL RESIDENCE OF THE CZARS OF RUSSIA, 5603.

davening with awe-inspiring cries and tunes. This dramatic *tefila* continued until the words, “*Hapodeinu miyad melachim, malkeinu hagoaleinu mikaf kol hearitzim*” (He who redeems us from the hand of kings, our King who delivers us from the grip of all the tyrants). The rest of Maariv was completed as quickly as possible, after which the Tzemach Tzedek sprung out of his circle.

Not long thereafter, shocking and delightful news spread throughout Russia. The fifty-eight year old Czar, who up until this point was in perfect health, suddenly died. Apparently a common cold had quickly turned to pneumonia and claimed his life. Even his physician had seen no mortal danger until the night before Nikolai’s death—the very same night as the Tzemach Tzedek’s passionate prayer.¹⁵

THE REGIONAL OPPRESSOR

VLADIMIR VEREVKIN

The antagonist in this story is the governor of Vitebsk by the name Verevkin. This hot-tempered anti-semitic ruler of the Province of Vitebsk in which many Jews, including the Rebbeim, held citizenship. As we shall see, he used his position of power to harass the Rebbe Maharash by attempting to illegally conscript the Rebbe Rashab.

The only documented Governor of Vitebsk bearing the Verevkin name was General Vladimir Verevkin. Verevkin was born in 1821 to Nikolai Verevkin, a distinguished military man descended from one of Russia's ancient noble families.

Official records for Vladimir Verevkin place him as governor between the years 1863–1867, and his death in the year 1896. These dates do not align with the antagonist of our story because, first, in these years of governance, the Rebbe Rashab was no older than six—too young for conscription in the post-Cantonist era. Second, our antagonist died as an immediate result of the Rebbe Maharash's actions, whereas the aforementioned Verevkin died several years after the *histalkus* of the Rebbe Maharash.

The possibility remains that another Verevkin served as governor at a later time. Alternatively, it is possible that the limited records available contain inaccuracies.



Twisted Like A Bagel

In the 5620s, the Russian military introduced general conscription. Every male would be expected to serve in the army, including all Jews. In anticipation of the enactment of this law, the Tzemach Tzedek purchased *Zatchetnye Bilyeten*—exemption certificates—for all of his grandchildren. These limited-time documents, sold for the sum of five-hundred ruble each, were to guarantee their holder freedom from the coming draft. But, in the Rebbe Rashab's case, more than a certificate would be necessary for exemption.

Vladimir Verevkin, governor of the Vitebsk Province (Gubernia) where the Rebbeim were registered as citizens, was no friend of the Jews. In a petition to the government in Peterburg, he insisted that the Jews in his region were evading the new draft. He suggested, as a propaganda strategy, to have a member of the Schneerson family serve

in the army. This, he assured, would influence the Jews to cease concealing their sons from the draft board.

Attempts were made to sway the Rebbe Maharash to allow the Rebbe Rashab to be drafted. However, despite assurances that various accommodations would be made for him (he would not be required to live in the barracks and his clothing would be free of *shatnez*), the Rebbe Maharash adamantly refused.

Seeing that diplomacy failed, the government overrode the *Zatchetnye Bilyet* and issued a warrant, allowing Verevkin to seize the Rebbe Rashab and draft him by force.

Although the Rabbeim were officially citizens of Vitebsk Gubernia (Province)—Verevkin's territory—the city of Lubavitch actually belonged to the province of Mohilev. Verevkin, therefore, sought consent from the Mohilev Governor to carry out his scheme. The Mohilev Governor replied, with seeming indifference, that he

would neither impede nor assist in Verevkin's activities.

One night, the Rebbe Maharash summoned Ivan the wagon driver with instructions to take the Rebbe Rashab far away. First, he was to travel to Husayn and, after resting, to a suburb past Smolensk. The entire journey was to take no longer than four hours—even if the horses died from the strain. He then instructed the four watchmen of the Rebbe's *chatzer* that nobody should be given entry until 6:00 a.m.

Less than 45 minutes later, a group of Gendarmes, dispatched from Vitebsk, arrived in Lubavitch with orders to bring the Rebbe Rashab. To their dismay, they were informed that they could not enter until the morning. (It would be illegal for them to perform a police inspection during night hours, since the Rebbe Maharash held the status of "Hereditary Honored Citizen".)

The Gendarmes were forced to find lodgings for the night and returned at 9:00 a.m. They entered the *chatzer*, but were greeted with a message from the Rebbe Maharash: he was currently unavailable to receive them—at 12:00 they could enter his office.

When granted an audience, after their humbling experience, the officer said that they needed to perform a search of the property. The Rebbe Maharash responded, "Nu, make a search. I'm unaccustomed to being searched; usually they ask me and do as I say." The shocked officer replied, "Do you know who sent me?" The Rebbe Maharash retorted, "I know who he is, does he know who I am? But he will know! I will be in Vitebsk and will meet with him. Now search," and with that he left for the Sukkah.

The Mohilev Governor, sympathetic to the Rebbe Maharash, scheduled his regular inspection of the province earlier than usual, in order to meet the Rebbe Maharash and inform him of his dialogue with Verevkin.

The Rebbe Maharash then traveled to Vitebsk and met with the Governor together with an entourage of Chassidim. Verevkin was welcoming but unforthcoming. He claimed to be simply acting on the orders of his superiors in the Capitol, leaving the power to revoke the order beyond his jurisdiction.

The next day, Verevkin paid a visit to the Rebbe Maharash to continue the conversation. Before leaving, Verevkin asked the Rebbe Maharash to visit him again in his private residence.

At their third meeting, the conversation was more explicit. The Rebbe Maharash declared unequivocally that his son would not serve in the army. Enraged by



LIBRARY OF AGUDAS CHASSIDEI CHABAD

AN EXEMPTION
CERTIFICATE FOR THE
REBBE RASHAB, DATED
5639.

the Rebbe Maharash's fearlessness, Verevkin dropped his friendly pretense and retorted harshly.

Undeterred, the Rebbe Maharash continued, "Tonight I travel to Peterburg. Tomorrow night I will arrive there. And by the following morning, I'll be in the Ministry, and I will nullify the decree. If they refuse, I have only one option left: to renounce my Russian citizenship and relocate my entire family to Eretz Yisroel. So I ask you, at any rate, to prepare all necessary documents. But if this matter is in your hands, cancel the decree. Don't force me to travel, because you will pay a steep price. I give you the time until departure." And with that, he left.

The Governor called after him, "Be well," but the Rebbe Maharash ignored him.

In Peterburg, the Rebbe Maharash met with officials and presented evidence that, contrary to Verevkin's claim, the Jews of Mohilev and Vitebsk were not evading the draft. Within a few days, the decree was annulled and the Rebbe Maharash was on his way home. But Verevkin had yet to pay for his machinations.

The route the Rebbe Maharash chose to return home passed through Vitebsk. He stopped there briefly to say a *maamar*. In the midst of his recitation, he uttered the words, "*haichail hanegef*"¹⁶ (the plague has begun), which had no relation to the content of the *maamar*.

Immediately, Verevkin was seized with a horrific illness, his body convulsing in excruciating pain "like a bagel." His wife sent an agent to Lubavitch to ask for forgiveness, but the Rebbe Maharash said, "It's too late," and would not see him. Verevkin perished three hours later amid great suffering.¹⁷

THE LAST MONARCH

NIKOLAI II

Nikolai (Nicholas) II Romanov (1868–1918) was the last Emperor of Russia. His reign was marked by an explosion of revolutionary sentiment and its brutal repression by the Czar's military.

For the Jews, his reign is remembered for the persecution they endured. Aside from the perpetuation of discriminatory laws, a nationalist anti-semitism developed in Russia as a reaction to the Revolutionaries.

Scores of deadly pogroms were perpetrated with general tolerance, and some degree of admiration, from the Czar and his government.

Nikolai continuously held onto the belief in his inherent superiority and gave little to no recognition of the need for liberalization. The world saw no end to the Romanov control over the Russian populace.

Suddenly, in a swift series of protests and military mutinies known as “The February Revolution,” the Czar was forced to abdicate. This effectively ended the Russian monarchy in a way nobody could have conceived. How was it possible?



A Revolutionary Maamar

With the German advance into Russia during World War I in 5676, the Rebbe Rashab fled Lubavitch because he did not want to come under the rule of Kaiser Wilhelm.¹⁸ Despite the ongoing war, Lubavitch eventually managed to reorganize in the city of Rostov.

On Shabbos, 26 Teves 5677, the Rebbe Rashab recited a *maamar* as usual. He chose as a *dibbur hamaschil* the *posuk* “*Vayomer... re'eh n'saticha Elokim l'pharoh*.¹⁹ Chassidim reviewed the *maamar* diligently, delving into the deep concepts explained therein, but most of them failed to see its broader significance.

Only the Chassidim to whom every detail of the *maamar* was of utmost importance, realized the message contained—primarily—in the opening and conclusion of the *maamar*. (These elements of the *maamar* are sometimes seen as “passports” to the core of the *maamar*. Therefore, they are sometimes studied in a more cursory manner.)

In those unassuming lines, the Rebbe Rashab

explained the remarkable power required of Moshe to break Pharaoh. When *kelipa* is in its full strength—retaining its G-dly vitality—*tzaddikim* do not have the power to eliminate it entirely. However, Moshe destroyed Pharaoh at the height of his unquestionable authority—possible only with the power of *Atzmos Ein Sof*.

Not long thereafter began the “February Revolution”, a series of protests and uprisings which could not be quelled by Imperial forces.²⁰ Merely weeks later, Nikolai II abdicated from the throne, nominating his brother in his stead. Seeing his slim chances of maintaining control, his brother refused to accept the throne. Thus, three centuries of unbreakable Czarist rule came to a sudden end.²¹

(Interestingly, on Parshas Va'era 5742, the Rebbe said a *sicha* about the Children's Sefer Torah and its power to break *kelipa*. As part of that theme, the Rebbe mentioned this story of the Rebbe Rashab. Two days later, Mikhail Suslov, an important member of the Communist party, suddenly died.)²²

THE NOTORIOUS DICTATOR

JOSEPH STALIN

After the death of Vladimir Lenin—leader of the Communist party in Russia—a fierce power struggle ensued.

Joseph Stalin, who previously held a marginally significant position, managed to fight his way up in prominence. Through undermining, exiling, and executing his political rivals, he consolidated his power over the USSR, creating a dictatorship with himself at its helm.

For the Chassidim in Russia, Stalin's power brought an increase in religious persecution—as part of his general policy of aggression.

In the late 1940s, Stalin's media began warning the public against “rootless cosmopolitans.” The reports gradually become more explicit in their warnings—the danger referred to was the Zionists and Jews.

The smear campaign morphed into “The Doctors Plot.” In 1953, the government claimed to discover a “terrorist cell” of doctors. These doctors—agents of the West (Jews and Zionists)—were plotting to undermine the Soviet utopia and its leaders through medical malpractice. Most of the accused were Jews and had obviously Jewish last names.

This ongoing media campaign landed on the fertile ground of centuries-old, carefully cultivated, Russian anti-semitism. Jews immediately felt the violent reaction and dreadfully awaited the end of the story. All were sure that a mock trial of the doctors would be followed by even worse persecution. Some historians even posit that Stalin's plan was for the doctors' plot to culminate in the mass deportation of Russia's Jews to extermination camps.

Nizkarim V'naasim

“The recitation of this maamar... was connected, it appears, with the events at the time leading to the demise of the ruler of “that country”—a tzorer Yisroel—as was understood at the time from the story the Rebbe said as a preface to the maamar...”

These words, edited by the Rebbe for the introduction to the maamar “Al Kein Karu 5713,” confirmed speculation which had been circulating amongst Chassidim for close to forty years.

As the details of this story have been elaborated upon in many other sources,²³ it will be presented here briefly.



A SCENE FROM THE FARBRENGEN OF PURIM 5713, WHICH EVIDENTLY DEPICTS THE REBBE SHOWING HOW THE CHOSSID PROCLAIMED “HOORAH!”

The Rebbe's Purim farbrengen in 5713 began quite ordinarily. The Rebbe opened with a *maamar*, spoke of things related to Purim, and encouraged all those present to celebrate with unbridled joy.

However, a nervous feeling was also present at the farbrengen. The Chassidim, many of whom had only escaped the USSR relatively recently, were worried for their brethren still trapped in Stalin's grip. Throughout the farbrengen, *Lchaims* and requests for *brachos* were made on behalf of Russian Jewry.

At around 4:00 a.m., the Rebbe related a curious story with no apparent relevance: After the revolution that ousted the Czar of Russia, the Rebbe Rashab instructed the Chassidim to partake in the government elections.

Among the Chassidim who came to vote was a man totally oblivious to worldly affairs. Not knowing the politics, he nonetheless came to fulfill the Rebbe's directive. (Obviously, he first went to *mikvah* and put on his garment—as is fitting for the Rebbe's directive.)

After carefully following his friends' instructions on how to vote, he saw a group of people excitedly cheering, "Hoorah!" The chossid joined in as well and, still on his divinely focused mission, proclaimed with all seriousness, "הוּא־רַע ! הוּא־רַע !" —he is bad. (In telling the story, the Rebbe mimicked the innocent chossid's cheering—with his hands positioned in a triangle and imitating the serious tone in which the chossid spoke.)

The crowd was in for a further surprise. After concluding the mysterious story, the Rebbe repeated it while facing the crowd on his right, and once more while facing his left! The Rebbe paused, and the Chassidim sensed that the Rebbe expected them to follow suit. They jumped up and proclaimed “Hu Ra! Hu Ra! Hu Ra!”

A SOVIET GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCEMENT PUBLISHED JUST WEEKS AFTER STALIN'S DEATH, STATING THAT THE MINISTRY OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS CONDUCTED A REVIEW OF THE "DOCTOR'S PLOT" CASE AND FOUND THAT THE CONFESSIONS WERE FORCED THROUGH "INADMISSIBLE AND STRICTLY FORBIDDEN METHODS OF INVESTIGATION." THE DOCTORS WERE DECLARED COMPLETELY INNOCENT OF ESPIONAGE, TERRORISM, AND SABOTAGE.

СООБЩЕНИЕ
Министерства внутренних дел СССР

В Президиуме Верховного
Совета СССР

Immediately thereafter, the Rebbe's face took on a serious tone and he began the *maamar* "Al Kein Karu." Aside from the strange circumstances surrounding the *maamar*, this was also the first time that the Rebbe recited two *maamarim* on one occasion.

Days after Purim, the news was released that Stalin *ym”sh* had died, and the “doctor’s plot” was quickly dropped.

THE POWER OF TORAH

Amazingly, the Rebbe not only confirmed his role in that event, but gave us an inkling into how it was done as well—“*the recitation of this maamar.*” Chassidus explains that Torah—especially *pnimiyus haTorah*—has the power to transform the world. By merely explaining a concept in Torah, that concept can be manifested in tangible reality.²⁴

In the *maamar* of *Al Kein Karu*, the Rebbe explained the spiritual significance of Haman's lottery. In brief, Haman wished to tap into Hashem's transcendence above *hishtalshalus* and, consequently, above the differentiation between good and evil—much like a lottery in which all options are of equal appeal. Only then would it be possible for Haman—evil—to decree annihilation on the Jews—*kedusha*.

Nonetheless, the *maamar* concludes, Haman failed. Because although Hashem is indeed completely beyond the universe, and nothing contains value before his sublimity, he chooses to love the Yidden above all else. Thus, even with a lottery, Amalek is destroyed, and the Yidden are victorious.

The connection is ever apparent. Stalin wished to annihilate the Jews—only from the level of “lottery” is there even a possibility for such a scheme. Even then, Hashem’s love for his chosen nation shines forth—Stalin suddenly dies and his scheme dies with him.

THE ARABIAN KING

FAISAL

Faisal bin Abdulaziz Al Saud (1906–1975) was proclaimed King of Saudi Arabia in 1964. Under his direction, Saudi Arabia underwent a transformative process of modernization and bolstered its world prestige.

His influence was not limited to his own territory. As a key player in the Arab League, he stood behind the Arab attacks on Eretz Yisroel, even providing military support.

Aside from sending thousands of troops to attack in the Yom Kippur War, he thought of an economic weapon which would give him global power: oil. Saudi Arabia, and a host of Arab countries under its influence, placed an oil embargo on countries that supported Eretz Yisroel.

Throughout the U.S., Western Europe, and many more countries, oil prices skyrocketed (if oil was available at all), and the economy plummeted. In those five months, the Western world was brought to its knees in desperation from which it would not recover for a while. King Faisal, sworn enemy of the Jews, became a force to be reckoned with in the eyes of the international community.



Limakei Mitzrayim Bivchoreihem

On Shabbos Hagadol 5735, which fell on 10 Nissan (the same *kvius* as the original Shabbos Hagadol), the Rebbe spoke at length about Shabbos Hagadol from various angles.

In the opening of the farbrengen, the Rebbe explained the straightforward story of Shabbos Hagadol and why it merits to be called "*nes gadol*"—a great miracle. Egypt's firstborns—their finest and most dignified—turned against their country and dealt a crippling blow on their own. From the *kelipa* itself came its attackers—the advantage of *is'hapcha*—that's a great miracle.

The Rebbe then explained that when remembered properly (*nizkarim*), these events are renewed every year (*naasim*). Even while still in *galus*, as the Yidden were in the time of the story, the great miracle of "*Limakei Mitzrayim bivchoreihem*" is accomplished.

Less than three days after this farbrengen, King Faisal hosted a "Majlis," a traditional Arab event in which the King entertained guests. One of the guests present was the King's nephew, Prince Faisal.

Prince Faisal approached his royal uncle to greet him in the traditional manner—a kiss on the King's nose. As he leaned over, the prince suddenly withdrew a pistol from his robes and shot the King twice at point-blank range.

The shocked spectators rushed to apprehend the assassin and bring the King medical attention. The King received the first bullet to his brain and died within hours, if not instantly. News agencies scrambled to report the sensational scandal, desperately trying to point to a motive for Prince Faisal to murder his uncle.

Rabbi Leibel Groner—one of the Rebbe's *mazkirim*—recorded an entry in his diary that day. "The Rebbe read a *tzetel* that someone had written to him. He then asked, 'Has anything happened to Faisal?' I replied, 'Yes, he was killed by his nephew.' After asking about the details of what happened, the Rebbe asked if the assassin's motives

were known. Reb Leibel reported that the narrative presented on the radio stations was that the prince was mentally unstable.

“Some time went by while the Rebbe replied to a few more letters. Then he said, with a smile, ‘By *krias yam suf* there were also such Yidden who said that a wind blew’ [the waters apart]. I replied to the Rebbe, ‘This is what the Rebbe spoke about on Shabbos—‘*Limakei Mitzrayim bivchoreihem*’. The Rebbe smiled again, ‘So you are not one of those who don’t believe in miracles!’”²⁵

The True King

Everything one encounters—certainly stories of the Rabbeim—serves as a lesson and directive in *avodas Hashem*. Let us suggest one lesson that can be gained from these stories.

Jewish continuity is unlike that of any other nation. The existence of every nation is dictated by the rules of nature, but Yidden are not connected with nature. Our lives are directed exclusively by Torah and *mitzvos*.

When a difficult time or decree arises, *Rachmana litzlan*, we cannot rely on diplomacy or political activism with the nations of the world—our endurance does not come through those means. We must rectify our shortcomings and deepen our commitment to Torah and *mitzvos*.

To panic regarding the situation of the Yidden, as perceived by our physical and nature-biased vision, has no

place as well. Although by all natural calculations another nation in such a situation would cease, we survive and flourish through our commitment to Torah and *mitzvos*.

To be sure, we are expected to work through natural means, but this is not the cause of our salvation. Diplomacy and activism are merely “clothing” of nature with which to “dress” our miraculous salvation (in line with the concealment of *Elokus* during *galus*). So long as our strengthening in Torah and *mitzvos* is sufficient, our subsequent salvation will be perfectly fine with dressing in “threadbare clothing.”²⁶

This point is emphasised in a poignant way in the stories we have recalled. Without any political maneuvers—without any natural activities at all—the highest echelons of leadership were manipulated and brought down. The Rabbeim slipped away the cloak of nature from upon the miraculous, helping us realize what lies beneath the surface of our survival.

We may not have the power of the Rabbeim. We may need to reckon with the apparent leaders of our governments, but we are not at their mercy. As the adage goes, “*Lev melachim visarim biyad Hashem*” (the heart of kings and ministers are in the hand of Hashem). Let us remember that Hashem is truly directing every aspect of our lives in a miraculous way, and may this bring us to the day that all will recognize the true King—“*Vihayah Hashem l’melech al kol ho’oretz*.” █

1. Gittin 62a.

2. Maamar Shir Hamaalos 5722 ch. 4 based on Torah Or (Vayeshev 27b) and Likkutei Torah (Tazria 22c).

3. In Sefer Hasichos 5701 it is implied that Nikolai actually struck the Alter Rebbe. However, in Sefer Hasichos 5703 it seems that Nikolai merely attempted to scare him.

4. Based on Likkutei Dibburim vol. 3, p. 799 (Sefer Hasichos 5703 p. 61). Sefer Hasichos 5701 p. 28.

5. See “We Want To See The Rebbe,” Derher Cheshvan 5782; “Confluence of Worlds,” Derher Nissan 5782.

6. Dr. Lilienthal was the grandson of Shimon “Hakofer” (Sefer Hasichos 5703 p. 91), the infamous undercover Maksil who was exposed by the Alter Rebbe. See Divrei Yemei Chayei Admur Hazaken p. 32.

7. It seems that this occurred Rosh Hashana 5604, shortly after the Asifas Harabbanim leading to the establishment of the government schools, and coinciding with Lilienthal’s mysterious disappearance from the Russian scene.

8. Based on Sefer Hasichos 5704 p. 4. See also Toras Sholom p.79.

9. Sefer Hasichos 5701 p. 27.

10. Diedushka p. 610.

11. Based on Sefer Hasichos 5696 p. 141. See Igros Kodesh vol. 3, letter #717.

12. 14, 7. It also appears in other Midrashim.

13. See Likkutei Sichos vol. 16, p. 148 (first *sicha* for Beshalach).

14. Based on Likkutei Sippurim Tzemach Tzedek story #12.

15. Based on Toras Sholom p. 80. See the *Sapir* journal, vol. 1 (Sivan 5785), pp. 11–34 for a

comprehensive overview on this story.

16. Bamidbar 17:11.

17. Based on Reshimas Hayoman pp. 200–202, and Toras Menachem vol. 3, p. 300.

18. Lubavitch Vichayaleha p. 98.

19. Printed in Sefer Hamaamarim 5677 p. 129.

20. Not to be confused with the October Revolution—the Communist coup against the Democracy that replaced the Czar.

21. Based on Hamelech Bemisibo vol. 2, pp. 120, 125. Sichas Parshas Vaera 5742.

22. Diedushka p. 609.

23. See *Samarkand* (Hebrew), p. 303. “Heavenly affairs,” Derher Adar 5777.

24. Based on the *maamar* Shir Hamaalos 5722.

25. Based on Hamzkar vol. 1, pp. 224–225.

26. Based on Likkutei Sichos vol. 1, p. 215.

INTUITION AND INFLUENCE

THE WOMAN'S OBLIGATION
TO SPREAD YIDDISHKEIT

Compiled By: Rabbi Levi Greenberg (OH)

Written By: Rabbi Shneur Itzinger



STEPPING UP AND STEPPING OUT¹

A young girl living in ancient Shechem, no older than ten, had grand ideas for the city and its people.

Dinah had only recently arrived in the area with her father and eleven brothers. Yaakov, her father, had no plans to settle there long-term. Young Dinah, confident in her ability to be a positive influence, went out to observe the local girls. She wasn't looking for playmates—she went out with a purpose: to inspire them to join the righteous ways of her family, descendants of Avraham, who had rejected the idol worship so common at the time and served only Hashem.

Her intentions were pure, and ultimately she would succeed, at least to a degree. The entire male population of Shechem would undergo *milah*—a form of *giyur*—as a result of what she set in motion, and the female population became integrated into Yaakov's family. Dinah's goal of influencing Shechem was a success.

[True, the story also led to tragic

consequences, alongside her positive influence on Shechem and its people. But that was beyond Dinah's control. The Rebbe explains that, according to Rashi's interpretation, her violation at the hands of Shechem was not her fault, but rather a punishment for her father's actions.]²

Why didn't she stay home, modest and quiet? She had inherited this outwardness from her righteous mother, Leah, who was also known for going out.³ Leah didn't shy away from acting when she sensed an opportunity to bring something holy into the world. Dinah also had this power. In fact, a previously missed opportunity to use that power is what led to this story's tragic outcome.

Not long before this episode, Dinah's father hid her in a box to prevent her wicked uncle Esav from seeing her. He feared the danger of Esav setting his sights on her, but Yaakov was punished for this. Had Esav been allowed to meet Dinah, her righteousness would have almost certainly influenced him. She had the strength to reverse the dynamic: rather than being corrupted, she might

have been the one to transform Esav for the better, and it was a risk worth taking. But her father erred on the side of caution, and the opportunity was lost.⁴

This time, Dinah followed in her mother Leah's footsteps, who represented the *avoda* of the *baal teshuvah*, going outward to transform the world around her. Dinah did not remain shielded from view. She stepped out to do good.

Dinah's willingness to step outside and engage is a message to her great-grandnieces, the Jewish women of today. True, the Torah tells us "*kol kevuda bas melech penima*," serving inside the home as *akeres habayis* is a woman's primary mission. However, those who are gifted with exceptional qualities and can influence others, to be "outgoing" like Dinah, also have an essential role to play on the outside. In a *tzniusdike* way, women should

help their fellow sisters who have lost their connection to Yiddishkeit return to the path of Avraham.



Women are uniquely positioned to do *hafatzas hamaayanos*. Debates and arguments are a man's way of operating. Wise and caring words, delivered in the soft and peaceful manner of women, are a more effective and longer-lasting method of influencing others.

As the Rebbe writes,⁵ "the woman is bestowed with a greater and more expressive measure of feeling and heartfeltness, and she is therefore especially suited to arouse and stimulate the inborn Jewish feelings of *Ahavas Hashem*, *Ahavas Hatorah* and *Ahavas Yisroel*."

Women have the power, and they should certainly use it for the good.

A SIDE JOB ON THE OUTSIDE⁶

When dark clouds appeared over a medieval town, the residents raced to prepare for the approaching storm. Strong winds can be brutally unforgiving to anything in their path, especially homes or belongings left unsecured.

High above the town towers the windmill, a familiar symbol of medieval ingenuity. The windmill not only does not fear the storm, it embraces it. While strong winds can topple the fruit of one's labor and leave destruction behind, the windmill does the opposite. It harnesses those very winds and transforms them for energy. What could have been harmful becomes productive. The gale becomes a source of light and power, thanks to a structure standing tall, spinning its sails to fuel the town below.

This image of transformation reflects the Jewish people's journey through *galus*. We too face powerful winds, forces that threaten to shake us. But like the windmill, we don't just endure. We take the struggle itself and elevate it, turning challenge into *kedusha*, and lifting the world with us.

An even more elevated version of this idea is the *ananei shemaya*, the heavenly clouds we long for to carry us to Eretz Yisroel. These clouds are also driven by the wind.

With the right effort, we can take the winds of confusion, pressure, and darkness that surround us and rise above. We can transform those very forces into vehicles that carry us and the entire world toward Moshiach.

Now, being the windmill in the hurricane of *galus* is a tall order. When the storm rages and the world shakes, it's much easier to stay inside the warmth and light of the Jewish home. To this, the *navi Yirmeyahu* speaks up with his prophetic words: "*yesh sachar lip'ulasech*—your work shall be rewarded."

Yirmeyahu prophesied about the *churban* and the long, bitter *galus* that followed. His very name comes from the word *mar*—bitter. And yet he, specifically he, is the one who promises us that our mission in *galus* will succeed. That our efforts will bear fruit and we will be rewarded.

His prophecy and very name teach us that our job in *galus* is to embrace the storm, even while begging Hashem for it to end. That we have the power to transform the bitterness of exile into light, and use the challenges to propel us forward.

All we need to do is step outside, out of our safe homes and into the street, where the winds howl and the storm rages. It's there, facing the challenges, that we discover the strength to transform the darkness.

How?

When the home we leave behind is a fortress of *kedu-sha*. A home where Jews not only *live* but are *enlivened*, nurtured, and cradled. A true Yiddishe home, built on the strong foundations laid by the *akeres habayis*.

The *navi* tells the Jewish woman that there is a reward for her actions. Is this promise necessary? Wouldn't Hashem surely help us anyway? The reason for this guarantee is because of the "secondary" nature of the work. A Jewish woman's primary focus is inward. Raising her children, supporting her husband's Torah learning—these are the cement in the foundation, building and strengthening the walls of her home. The outside world? That's the "extracurricular" job. The side mission. And yet even there, Yirmeyahu promises success in the name of Hashem.

A Jewish woman's ultimate sphere of influence is the entire world. Have you heard of another Jewish woman, your dear sister, who didn't have the opportunity to grow up in a Yiddishe environment? Who doesn't have a shelter in the storm of *galus*, and is left exposed to the winds outside? It's the Jewish woman's role to step out of her warm home and bring her inside.

It may feel like a volunteer mission, something beyond your core home-based responsibility. But ultimately, Hashem has promised us success and placed this task in our hands. "*Your work shall be rewarded*," He tells us, and His rewards are known to reach every level: spiritual, physical, and everything in between.

So the call to the Jewish woman is clear: step up, take responsibility, and step outside to educate and uplift the entire world. Be there for your sisters in need, and bring them into your sturdy, *akeres habayis*-built fortress.

And the ultimate reward? The *navi*'s promise in the following *passuk*: "*v'shavu banim ligvulam*—the children will return home." T

1. Adapted from Likkutei Sichos vol. 35, p. 150ff.

2. While some interpret Dinah's actions as going against the spirit of *kol kevuda bas melech penima*, here too the Rebbe explains that according to Rashi, her intentions were entirely meritorious. See footnote 18 of the *sicha*.

3. See *Vayeitzei* 30:16.

4. From the fact that Yaakov was punished for hiding Dinah, we see that it wasn't only a possibility that Dinah would bring Esav to *teshuvah*, rather it is clear that that would have been the outcome. See *seif* 2 of the *Sicha*.

5. Free translation of the Rebbe's letter to the N'shei Chabad Convention, Lag B'omer 5721. The original Yiddish letter is printed in *Igros Kodesh* vol. 20, pp. 265–266.

6. Adapted from *Sicha* to N'shei Chabad, Rosh Chodesh Sivan 5746. *Hisvaaduyos* 5746 vol. 3, p. 445ff.

ADDITIONAL INSIGHT:

- » A prophecy about the days of Moshiach tells us that "...old women shall yet sit in the streets of Yerushalayim."⁸ The reward for women being involved on the "outside streets" spreading Yiddishkeit, in a *tznius-dike* way, of course, will be the fulfillment of this *nevuah*.⁹
- » With *taharas hamishpacha* ensuring a child is born into a holy environment and *kashrus* supporting the child's growth and development in a sacred way, the success of all other *mitzvoim* is strengthened. Thus, the women's *mitzvoim* uphold and reinforce all the others. Even *mitzva tefillin*, while not directly one of the women's *mitzvoim*, can be supported by Jewish women by ensuring that tefillin are kosher and worn correctly.¹⁰
- » In the tefillin that Hashem wears, which declares the praise of the Jewish people—"Umi ke'amcha Yisrael, goy echad ba'aretz"—there is no distinction between men and women. Women can also participate in *mitzva tefillin*, such as by donating funds toward the purchase of new pairs. By doing so, they have a part not just in the heavenly tefillin, but in those worn here below.¹¹

7. Yirmeyahu 31:16. [This *passuk* was the theme of the N'shei Chabad convention the Rebbe was addressing.]

8. Zecharia 8:4.

9. *Toras Menachem* vol. 42, p. 173.

10. *Ibid.*, vol. 81, pp. 244–246.

11. *Ibid.*, vol. 51, pp. 86–87.



WATCH:
FROM INSIDERS
TO INFLUENCERS



לזכות הילד
ישראל שלום נ"י
לרגל יום הולדתו י"ז מיר-חישון

ה"ר שיגדל ל תורה לחופה
ולמעשים טובים מתנו
בריאות נכונה ושפע בג"ר
נה"ר כ"ק אדמור"ר והוריו ה"ז

The Rise of the Eltere Bochurim

By: Rabbi Mendy Greenberg (Twinsburg, OH)

Days of Darkness

The meeting took place under a heavy veil of secrecy.

Early in the year 5697, under the cover of darkness in a quiet corner of Moscow, a small group gathered for a fateful meeting. The chossid Reb Yonah Poltaver, his brother-in-law Reb Mordechai Eliezer Laptovsky, and a select group of 'eltere bochurim' in their late teens and early twenties gathered to deliberate on the future of Jewish education throughout the Soviet Union.

The previous two years had spelled doom for the vaunted Chassidic underground, the network of secret Yeshivos and Chadorim that dotted the landscape of Russia. One by one, the teachers and administrators of these courageous groups had been picked off by the NKVD, as the dreaded midnight knock on the door had come to haunt family after chassidishe family.

Children watched in horror as their fathers were marched out of their homes surrounded by armed guards, never to be seen again. Mothers struggled to raise their young children on their own, all the while fighting valiantly to free their husbands. It was no longer safe for fathers of young families to be involved in the underground; after all, who would ensure that their own children would be raised as G-d-fearing Jews in their absence?

It was time for dramatic change.

The New Leadership

The administrator of the Tomchei Temimim network for much of the previous decade had been Reb Avraham (Dreizin) Mayorer, but in recent years, multiple police raids had forced him into hiding. Another important figure, Reb Shaul Brook, had just managed to escape the Soviet Union and immigrate to Eretz Yisroel. That left



REB YONAH POLTAVER
IN HIS YOUTH

the leadership in the hands of the legendary Reb Yonah Hakohen (Kagan) Poltaver. In a secret letter from Poland, the Frierdiker Rebbe appointed him to lead the entire network.

Watching the situation become untenable, Reb Yonah called for this meeting.

It was a small group of *eltere bochurim*: Moshe Robinson, Yosef Goldberg, Shimon Stillerman, Yisrael Levine, Michel Rappaport, Nochum Wolosow, and Shalom Vilenkin. They were themselves students in the underground, gathering in quiet corners of shuls and private residences to carry on learning *nigleh* and Chassidus, davening *b'avodah*, and farbrenging. But that was about to change.

Reb Yonah stood up and made an announcement.

Dozens of *melamdim* have been arrested, he said, and many locations have been left without Torah teachers. Tomchei Temimim was in peril. From today onward, he said, the role of leadership is being placed on your shoulders. Your elders risked their lives to teach you Torah; now it is your turn to teach the next generation.

Reb Yonah held a similar meeting later that year, and Reb Mordechai Eliezer Laptovsky, held his own meeting with the *bochurim* of Zhitomir. One of the *bochurim*, Moshe Aharon Geisinsky, related his memories of that meeting:

“Reb Mordechai Eliezer called all the *bochurim* to his home and said to us: I see that Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim in Russia is shrinking to a frightening degree. Soon, it will simply disappear from the scene. Why are we sitting here and learning? We have no choice but to put our lives on the line and devote ourselves to bringing more students into Tomchei Temimim!”

At that meeting, Reb Mordechai Eliezer empowered the *bochurim* to establish new branches of Tomchei Temimim, telling them to travel across Russia and seek out boys who wished to join the yeshiva with their parents’ consent, to locate shuls that would agree to host the *bochurim*, and to find *roshei yeshiva* and *mashgichim* who could lead the *yeshivos* that would be established.

At the end of one of the meetings in Moscow (these became known as the “*Asifos of the Eltere Bochurim*”), Reb Yonah finished dramatically: “When we gather again—that is, if I will not be taken away to prison—we will continue the conversation.”



THE OLD SECTION OF KRIVOY ROG.

Rising to the Occasion

One of the *bochurim* at that first meeting, Michel Rappaport, reported the missions each one was given:

“It was decided that the *zal* would be in Zhitomir, the hometown of Reb Mordechai Eliezer. Reb Moshe Robinson was sent to Berditchev to give *shiurim* for younger students, Reb Yisroel Levin was sent to Krivoy Rog to open a yeshiva there, Reb Yosef Goldberg was sent to Klintsy, and I was sent to Kursk. Reb Nochum Wolosow remained in Moscow to manage operations from there, as deputy to Reb Yonah, and Reb Shalom Vilenkin traveled to Odessa.

“The funding came from Reb Yonah, delivered by courier, usually women, so as not to arouse suspicion. At times, we had to travel to Moscow ourselves to collect the funds and meet secretly there.”

Each *bochur* headed out into the unknown and got to work.

Krivoy Rog

Reb Yisroel Levine (father of Rabbi Berel Levine, chief librarian of the Rebbe’s library) was sent to Krivoy Rog.

“Reb Michoel Teitelbaum brought me four boys,” he related. “Leibel Mochkin, Yoel Duchman, Mendel Raskin, and Yehoshua Katzenelenbogen (Raskin). He told me that they were wild kids, and it was too hard for him to deal with them; they were only twelve years old. He said he’d go to Zhitomir, where the *bochurim* were older, and I should stay with the younger group. Later, a few more

joined: Tzvi Breslover, Chatzkel Brod, Velvel Menshiks (Auerbach), and Yisroel Modes.

"I began learning the sugya of *shnayim ochazin* with them. Reb Yonah Poltaver told me to keep an eye on the Breslover *bochurim* [apparently referring to Tzvi Breslover and Chatzkel Brod, who grew up in Breslover homes]—who wanted to travel to Uman, which would attract undue attention to the yeshiva, and also to watch over the *bochurim* from *anash*—they were still very young, and some wanted to daven at length, but they had no understanding of *nigleh* or Chassidus. They needed a firm hand."

Kursk

The Kursk branch was opened by Reb Michel Rapoport and Reb Shimon Stillerman, and they were later replaced by Reb Henoch Rappaport, Reb Michel's younger brother.

Reb Zalman Levin was one of the students in the Yeshiva at the time:

"During the day, we all learned together in one room. At night, we slept in an actual cellar—a pit beneath the ground—so that if anyone came searching for us, they wouldn't find a thing. We wandered from shul to shul, sometimes learning in attics, sometimes in basements, or in homes we rented from non-Jews.

"I remember one summer, we were holed up in an attic crawl space made of metal. The heat was unbearable. We

were all thirsty, but we couldn't go out during the day to get water—we were too afraid of being discovered. Throughout the week, we lived on bread and watermelon or cantaloupe. That was it. On Shabbos, families from *anash* would host us for meals.

"We learned Likkutei Torah, Kuntres Umayan, Tanya, Gemara l'Yyun and Girsa, and at times we would go—one by one, so as not to attract attention—to Reb Dovid (Kievman) Horodoker to learn Likkutei Torah with him. What he taught us made a deep impression on our hearts and minds. That's what carried me through the difficult years of the war and everything we endured.

"The farbrengens gave us strength during the hardest times. They revolved around one central theme: *mesirus nefesh*. Not to be fazed by anything. If we won't have *mesirus nefesh* for Torah learning—we'd end up just like the gentile youth wandering the streets. The Rebbe made us the patriots of Lubavitch, we would tell ourselves. We should betray that?! *Chas v'shalom*. We're the glowing embers of Yiddishkeit in Russia!"

Klintsy & Kuybyshev

Reb Yosef Goldberg was part of the founding group of Krivoy Rog, and afterwards left to Klintsy to open another branch. One day, the secret police burst into the shul to arrest him, but he wasn't present at the time and miraculously managed to escape. Another time, police entered to catch him as he sat learning in a shul; he promptly jumped out the window and disappeared. He soon opened another branch of Tomchei Temimim in Kuybyshev.

"During that period," he later confided to his son, Rabbi Yitzchak Goldberg, "I was certain that nothing would be left of me, *Rachmana litzlan*. It was just a matter of time before I'd be caught—and that would be the end. When I look at my family today, and my entire continued life, I see it as nothing but *chesed chinam*, pure, undeserved kindness from Hashem."

On another occasion, he shared that despite serving as a rosh yeshiva in Tomchei Temimim in Brunoy, France, for thirty-seven years and teaching countless *talmidim*, it was those six years in the underground that he described as "the most precious years of my life."

Berditchev

Reb Moshe Rubinson was sent to Berditchev. He gave outstanding *shiurim* and was famous for the



REB ZALMAN LEVIN IN HIS YOUTH.



A PHOTO RECENTLY DISCOVERED IN THE NKVD ARCHIVES SHOWING THE BOCHURIM IN BERDITCHEV RIGHT AFTER THEIR ARREST, 24 TEVES 5698.



REB MOSHE RUBINSON TEACHING A CHEDER CLASS.

LIBRARY OF AGUDAS CHASSIDEI CHABAD

warm, fatherly care he gave each *talmid*. Soon a significant number of boys gathered around him—no less than twelve, which was quite remarkable given the circumstances.

On Chof-Daled Teves 5698, Reb Moshe farbrenged with the *talmidim* in the tailors' shul, one of 18 still operating in Berditchev, when suddenly there was a loud bang on the door and two NKVD agents stormed in with pistols drawn. Reb Moshe jumped into a side room, but the agents conducted a search and they were caught; the entire group was lined up and marched to the police station.

For a full month, these young barely-mesivta-age *bochurim* were harassed by interrogators for information about the secret Yeshiva network, while they denied everything and claimed to be a group of friends who were hanging out together.

Their imprisonment finally came to an end when Reb Moshe Robinson took full responsibility for the Yeshiva and convinced the young boys to tell the whole story, so that they could finally be released. He spent several years in prison until he was miraculously set free. The young boys, however, were soon transferred to a government orphanage. After all, their parents were unfit to raise them as loyal Communists.

At first, no one even knew where the boys were. Reb Yonah's committee in Moscow sent Reb Michael Teitelbaum to investigate. He soon heard from a local Jew that he had noticed a strange sight: a group of young teenagers *under guard* at the government orphanage in Berditchev.

Reb Michael recruited Reb Henoch Rappaport, who was sixteen years old and had no beard, to secretly contact

the *bochurim* and help carry out the rescue. On Shabbos, when security was weaker, they snuck into the orphanage and smuggled the boys out, sending them that very day on a train to Kiev.

The Pivot to Asia

As each yeshiva was discovered and closed by the NKVD, *bochurim* began to hear about new opportunities in Russia's east, in regions like Kazakhstan and Georgia, where the persecutions were less severe and *yeshivos* were able to survive under the radar. Within a few years, Hitler invaded the Soviet Union, and everyone was forced to follow them east as well.

The *yeshivos* now reopened in Samarkand, Tashkent, and other cities. Due to the war, the NKVD lost some of its grip on the population, and many older Chassidim—refugees from the war—were able to safely join the administration of the *yeshivos* and take part in the Frierdiker Rebbe's holy work.

But for those few years before the war, the members of Tomchei Temimim were protected by a small group of *elte* *bochurim* who had risen to the occasion.

"All the harsh realities," related one of their young students, "seemed to fade the moment our rosh yeshiva—just a few years older than us—immersed us in a *maamar Chassidus*. His explanations somehow planted within us the *mesirus nefesh* we so desperately needed to hold on through the difficult moments." **T**

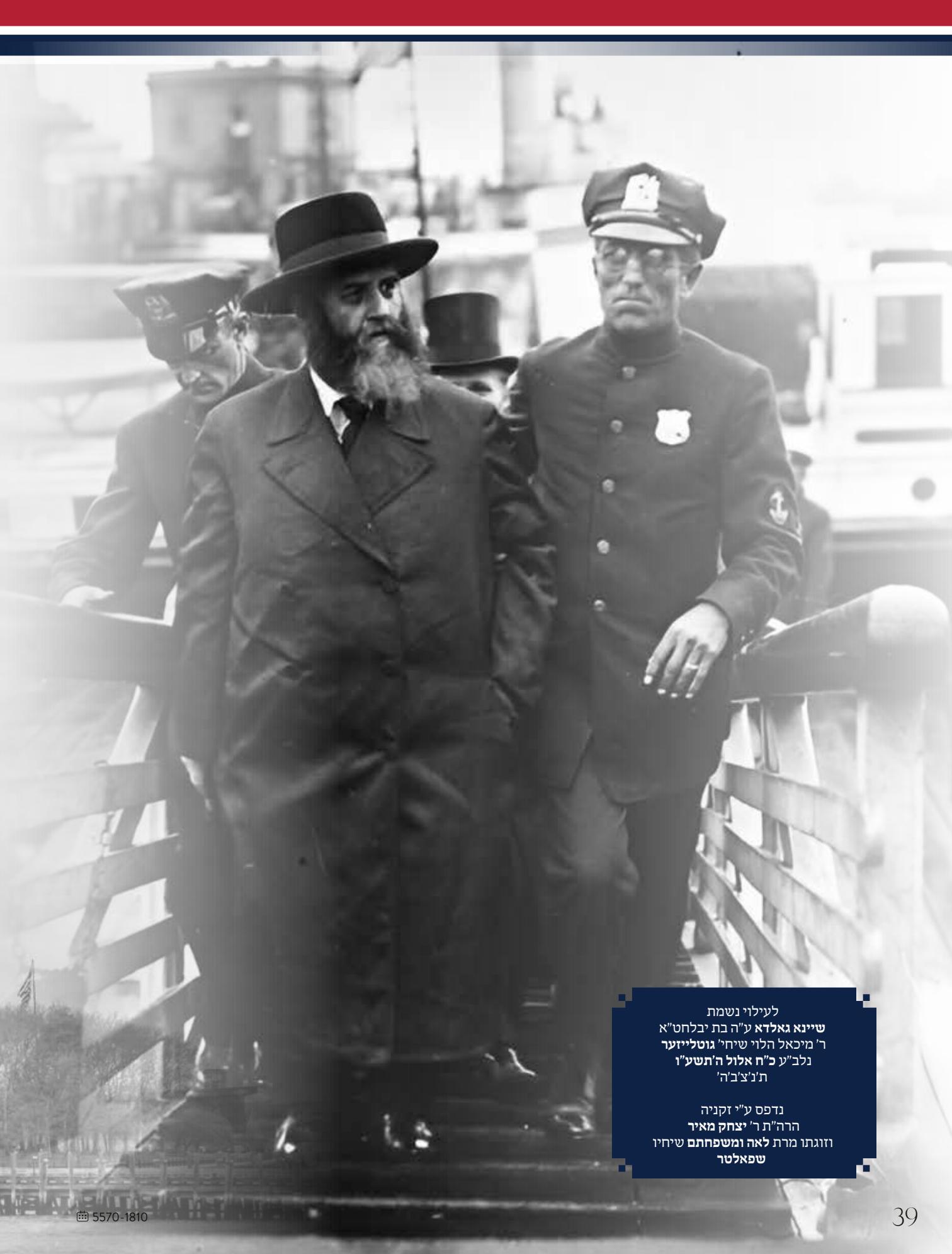
This article is based on Toldos Chabad b'Russia HaSovietis, Teshurah—Tiferes Banim Avosam, and Zichornosay by Reb Yisrael Yehudah Levine.

AMERICA
AWAKENED

THE
FRIERDIKER
REBBE'S
VISIT
TO THE
UNITED
STATES

By: Rabbi Mendy Greenberg (Twinsburg, OH)

Special thanks to Rabbi Shmuel Super and Mendel Wolf (Chicago) for their assistance in the preparation of this article.



לעלוי נשמת
שינא גאלדא ע"ה בת בלחת"א
ר' מיכאל הלי שייח' גוטלייזער
גלאב"ע כ"ז אלול ה'השע"ז
ת'יצ'ב'ה'

נדפס ע"י זקנין
הרה"ת ר' יצחק מאיר
וזוגתו מרת לאה ומשפחתם שייח'ו
שפאלטר

A Sea of Curiosity

The Friediker Rebbe was accustomed to traveling. He often spent time in spaces where he was one of the only—if not *the* only—visibly Jewish individuals. Curious stares were common.

So it was aboard the ship to America in Elul, 5689. The Friediker Rebbe would sit quietly on the deck or in the writing room, immersed in a booklet of *kesavim* or composing letters. A few passengers would glance his way—curious about the dignified figure with the beard and *yarmulke*—but nothing out of the ordinary.

Suddenly, that changed.

One day, as the Friediker Rebbe stepped out to one of the deck's cushioned benches, something was different. The glances became stares. Whispered conversations followed him. The air was thick with curiosity.

News had spread on the ship that they would not be docking immediately in New York Harbor. The captain had just received a radio transmission informing him that a private vessel would be meeting them at sea to escort a distinguished guest ashore, bypassing the typical customs procedures.



THE FRIEDIKER REBBE'S
REGISTRATION PAPERS
FOR HIS VISIT TO THE U.S.



The captain and his passengers now realized that they had been sharing their voyage with someone far more important than they had imagined.¹

The Unlikely Lifeline: America

For nearly a decade, the Friediker Rebbe had stood at the forefront of the battle to preserve Yiddishkeit in Soviet Russia. He had personally led the effort, organizing, inspiring, and funding the underground network keeping Jewish life alive under impossible conditions.

But nearly two years before his voyage to America, everything had changed. After the arrest and liberation of Yud-Beis Tammuz, the Friediker Rebbe was forced to leave the country.

As he sat on the train leaving Russia, the Friediker Rebbe penned a departing message to his Chassidim: *תקותי תאמצני והיא נחמתני אשר ריחוק המקום לא יפריד ח"ז—וח"ז בינוינו*—It is my hope and my solace that geographic distance will never, G-d forbid, separate us. Wherever he was, his bond with the Yidden of Russia would remain unbroken.

That's why he decided to visit America.

No. 86

DEclaration of Non-Immigrant Alien
ABOUT TO DEPART FOR THE UNITED STATES
AMERICAN CONSULAR SERVICE

AMERICAN CONSULATE, Riga Latvia May 17, 1929
I, Joseph Salomon SCHNEERSOHN, a citizen of Soviet Russia,
Report No. 116280, dated October 1, 1927
Leave of absence E14797
Issued by Soviet Ambassadors, Leningrad Russia,
am about to go to the United States accompanied by _____
I was born Oct. 8, 1871, Lavorish, Poland, Russia.
My occupation for the last two years was Rabbi.
and at present is Rabbi.
I desire to proceed to the United States for the purpose of religious investigation.
to remain for six months, and my address in the United States will be.
My references are Joint Distribution Committee, New York, N.Y.
M. Dubin, M. P., Christian Barone, Israe L. Riga, Latvia
I consider myself as a non-immigrant under the provisions of the Immigration Act of 1924 on the following grounds:
that I am proceeding to the United States purely for
purpose of temporary visit
and offer for inspection the following documents in support of my claim: letter, from
M. Dubin, M. P. to American Consul Riga, Latvia dated Jan. 20,
1929



KEHOT PUBLICATION SOCIETY

THE FRIERDIKER REBBE STEPS OFF THE BOAT, 12 ELUL 5689, FLANKED BY A POLICE HONOR GUARD.



KEHOT PUBLICATION SOCIETY

While temporarily settled in Riga, the Frierdiker Rebbe worked tirelessly to support the Jewish underground in Soviet Russia and to uplift the material and spiritual condition of Russian Jewry.

One of the greatest challenges was funding. Across Europe, Jewish communities had limited awareness of the dire situation facing their brethren in Russia. More importantly, they were themselves impoverished, ill-equipped to provide substantial support.

But America was different.

At the time, everyone knew America as the *treifene medina*. Jewish education was almost non-existent, and observance of Torah and *mitzvos* was in freefall. People said that Judaism in America had no future.

However, the United States excelled in the mitzvah of tzedakah. It had become the largest, wealthiest, and most philanthropic Jewish community in the world. More significantly, American Jewry had deep personal ties to Russia. Unlike other European Jewish communities, the majority of American Jews were Russian immigrants or the children of immigrants, many of whom had arrived just a generation earlier.

A sizable number came from Chabad backgrounds. Shuls bearing the names *Nusach Ari* and *Tzemach Tzedek* dotted the country. In Brownsville—then the heart of Jewish Brooklyn—there were no fewer than eleven *Nusach Ari* shuls.

When American Chassidim petitioned the U.S. government to help secure the Frierdiker Rebbe's release from Soviet imprisonment, they introduced him as the spiritual leader of "two hundred synagogues and 150,000 members."²

America was ripe for a visit.

Echoes of Excitement

When the visit was announced, the Chassidim were ecstatic.

It was Shevat of 5689 when the letter arrived from Reb Chatche Feigin, the Frierdiker Rebbe's secretary, bringing the news. The letter was addressed to Reb Yisroel Jacobson—one of the first *Temimim* in America—informing him that the Frierdiker Rebbe would be coming to raise awareness about the plight of Russian Jewry and to assess the state of Yiddishkeit in America.

For the small group of *Temimim* in the United States, it was earth-shattering. They had never dared dream that the Frierdiker Rebbe would actually come. They had never even asked. In their eyes, America was simply unworthy of such a visit.

A committee was swiftly assembled to coordinate the visit. The Kramer family, Reb Mendel Lokshin, Rabbi Jacobson, and a handful of devoted *anash* sprang into action—strategizing, spreading the word, and laying the

groundwork for the royal visit.³

The broader Jewish community, especially those in the *Nusach Ari* shuls, responded with great anticipation. By this time, the Frierdiker Rebbe was internationally known for his courageous defiance of Soviet tyranny and his relentless fight to keep Judaism alive under communism.

Although some were skeptical—“*What business does the Rebbe have in America? Does he think he can open a yeshiva here?*”—the overall mood was one of excitement. Across the country, communities formed committees, prepared accommodations, and planned dignified receptions.⁴

The *goldene medina* had never before welcomed a guest of such spiritual stature.

A New Chapter Begins

12 Elul 5689 was the day the Frierdiker Rebbe stepped onto American soil for the very first time.

Cameras flashed and excitement buzzed through the

crowd. Despite the downpour, hundreds had waited for hours just for a glimpse of the Frierdiker Rebbe. A police honor guard stood ready to escort him through the crowd.

As the Frierdiker Rebbe walked off the boat surrounded by policemen, it evoked memories of a different kind: when two years earlier, police had surrounded the Frierdiker Rebbe to take him to prison.

“Here, just like in Russia, I’m greeted by many policemen,” the Frierdiker Rebbe later remarked to a group of journalists. “But what a difference! There, they came to arrest me for spreading Torah to Jewish children. Here, they’re protecting me.”

A motorcade soon swept the Frierdiker Rebbe and his entourage to Boro Park, to the shul of Reb Eliyahu Simpson, where a newly constructed apartment on the second floor would serve as the Frierdiker Rebbe’s first American residence. Outside, the street was crowded with men, women, and children waiting to catch a glimpse of the Frierdiker Rebbe.

Soon, the Frierdiker Rebbe’s face appeared on the

TIMELINE

Over his ten months in the United States, the Frierdiker Rebbe visited countless shuls and communities. Accompanying him were his son-in-law, Rashag, his secretaries Reb Chatche Feigin and Chaim Lieberman, his uncle Reb Moshe Horenshtein and the famed Latvian chossid and diplomat, Reb Mordechai Dubin.

Here is a broad outline of the Frierdiker Rebbe’s travels.

On 12 Elul 5689, the Frierdiker Rebbe arrived in New York, remaining there until 13 Kislev. The first location was in Boro Park, above the shul of Reb Elya Simpson, and after Rosh Hashanah (in Brownsville, see sidebar), the Frierdiker Rebbe moved to a large home in Crown Heights, where he spent Sukkos and Simchas Torah.

On 13 Kislev, the Frierdiker Rebbe traveled to Philadelphia, where he stayed for one month, until 12 Teves. Upon arrival, he visited the Liberty Bell and sat in George Washington’s chair. The Frierdiker Rebbe held a large Yud-Tes Kislev farbrengen in the hall of Yeshiva Mishkan Yisrael.

From there, the Frierdiker Rebbe continued to Baltimore, staying until 4 Shevat. During the final days of that visit, he made a brief trip to Washington, D.C.

Following a short return to New York (5–11 Shevat), the Frierdiker Rebbe traveled to Chicago for an extended stay from 11 Shevat through 29 Nissan. During this time, he also visited Milwaukee. Pesach was marked in Chicago, with *sedorim* attended by large crowds, particularly on the second night of Pesach, with *sichos* that continued late into the night.

At the end of the Chicago visit, the Frierdiker Rebbe made several shorter visits to nearby cities. On 29 Nissan, he traveled to Detroit, on 6 Iyar, he traveled to S. Louis, and on 15 Iyar, he returned to New York.

After Shavuos, the Frierdiker Rebbe journeyed to Boston and its surrounding areas, staying from 19 Sivan until 3 Tammuz, when he returned once again to New York.

On 14 Tammuz, the Frierdiker Rebbe made his final trip to Washington, D.C., where he met with President Herbert Hoover. One week later, on 21 Tammuz, he departed the United States aboard the S.S. *Bremen*, arriving in Berlin on 27 Tammuz.



second-floor balcony, and he delivered a short *sicha*.

“Tremendous applause,” reported the *Morgen Journal*, “broke out from the crowd—men, women, and children—when he finished. Many began to head home, satisfied that they had seen the Lubavitcher Rebbe with their own eyes and received a blessing from him.

“But a large crowd remained, lingering outside the shul. They stood there the entire day, huddled under umbrellas in the rain, waiting for a chance to enter the building. Well into the night, the line outside the shul still hadn’t thinned, as committee members, hundreds of local residents, and others who had traveled from far and wide came to see the Rebbe.”⁵⁵

The Rebbe was in America!

The “Chabadization” of America

A journalist reported that a complaint was being lodged against the Friediker Rebbe during his visit:

“A chossid from one of the Ukrainian courts has been overheard lamenting: *There’s real danger here—the Lubavitcher Rebbe with his visit might just succeed in the ‘Chabadization’ of all the last remaining Chassidim in America!*”⁵⁶

For ten months—from 12 Elul until 21 Tammuz of the following year—the Friediker Rebbe traveled across the East Coast and the Midwest. Jewish newspapers were

filled with dramatic reports: somehow, ‘*treife*’ America had transformed into a vibrant Chassidic court.

Because of the spiritual climate of American Jewry at the time, we have very few transcripts of the *sichos* the Friediker Rebbe delivered throughout the visit, and a number of *maamarim* are missing as well. However, we have dozens of vivid newspaper descriptions that capture the remarkable atmosphere surrounding the Friediker Rebbe wherever he went.

The Friediker Rebbe left a profound impression on all who encountered him.

“He has an unforgettable countenance,” a reporter wrote in New York. “A *hadras panim*, a bright reddish beard, graying in the middle. But the most striking features are his eyes and his high, white forehead. The eyes are penetrating, deep—it feels as though they could look straight into the soul.”⁵⁷

Thousands came out to the train stations to greet him. People came and went from his accommodations at all hours of the day and night. *Minyanim* would gather spontaneously, and impromptu *farbrengens* formed regularly. City after city reported the same phenomenon, journalists expressing astonishment at how American Jewry was seemingly being “taken over.”

Scenes from the Stations

In every city, the ‘celebration’ of the Friediker Rebbe’s arrival began at the train station.

HEBREW SCHOOL
CHILDREN AND THEIR
TEACHERS GREET
THE FRIERDIKER
REBBE AT THE TRAIN
STATION IN S. LOUIS.



DR. HILTON PRICE

"At a quarter to one," a reporter describes the Frierdiker Rebbe's arrival in Philadelphia, "the train finally appeared—and from the wagon, a radiant, *Shechina*-like face appeared. It was the Rebbe himself, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn. The crowd surged forward toward the train car."⁹

In Detroit, a similar scene played out:

"The crowd that beleaguered Michigan Central Depot was many many times the estimate of the police department.... When the crowd got the first glimpse of the Rebbe... a sudden, spontaneous '*Baruch Haba*' erupted from everyone's mouth. This frightened the police somewhat, for they momentarily thought that trouble was brewing."⁹

Soon after arriving at the train station, the Rebbe

would be driven with a celebratory motorcade to his accommodations.

"Thousands of people had gathered around the house," it was reported in Philadelphia. "American youth stood at a distance, watching with reverence. Some tried to find their way into the house just to catch a glimpse of the Frierdiker Rebbe.

"The Chassidim sparkled with joy, their faces radiating with light. The excitement of seeing the Rebbe practically poured out of them—it was visible on their faces. The entire scene strongly evoked memories of the *alte heim*. 'It's been so long—so very long—since we've seen anything like this,' could be heard among the crowd."¹⁰

In Chicago, an enterprising journalist tried to gain entry into the home by asking the host, Mr. Gilman, if he could grant him access. Mr. Gilman smiled:

"Let you in? Will they even let *me* in? Right now, I'm no longer the owner of this house—the Rebbe and the crowd are. But come, let's try getting in through the alley. Maybe we'll manage to sneak in somehow. And if not—don't hold it against me..."

In every city, Reb Chatche Feigin would immediately begin organizing a list for *yechidus*, and a steady march of people would make their way through their home.

It wasn't just Chabad Chassidim or old-world Jews, a reporter in Baltimore noted.

"Among the many visitors who came daily to the Rebbe, one could often spot a surprising number of young, Americanized Jewish women—women who were as distant from Yiddish and Yiddishkeit as the North Pole is from the South. They were dressed in the latest

HOW TO RECEIVE KAVOD

During the Frierdiker Rebbe's visit, Reb Yisroel Jacobson began to notice that the Frierdiker Rebbe was losing weight. Concerned for the Frierdiker Rebbe's health, he spoke with Reb Nissan Telushkin, who revealed that the Frierdiker Rebbe had a custom: whenever he arrived in a new city, he would fast. The Frierdiker Rebbe had once explained to Reb Nissan, "*Kavod darf men oisdaren*—honor needs to be 'starved out.'"¹²

fashions, arriving in the most expensive cars, chauffeured by polished Black drivers in uniform.

“And yet, the Rebbe would speak to them about their Jewish identity. And from what I hear, more than a few of these women promised him that from that day forward, they would begin living as proud, committed *Yiddishe techter*.”¹²

This was not what people expected from a Rebbe who had ostensibly come to America for fundraising. After all, many *gute yidden* had visited before, and they were typically content to raise money for their institutions back home. But watching the scenes unfold, the reporter had a realization: this Rebbe was different.

“It seems that the Lubavitcher Rebbe came to America with the deliberate intention of launching two simultaneous campaigns—one spiritual, and one material...”¹³

Standing Room Only

In every city the Frierdiker Rebbe visited, the central event was the official community reception—often combined with a fundraiser for Russian Jewry. Large shuls filled with thousands of people, all eager to see the Frierdiker Rebbe.

The evening typically began with a series of speeches before the Frierdiker Rebbe’s address.

In Detroit:

“Chairing the event was Mr. Glist... In a brief opening address, he introduced Rabbi Elkin of Chicago... Next to speak was Rabbi Fischer... His remarks were marked by tact and sound logic, and the audience listened with great interest.

“Rabbi Stollman then took the podium. In moving words, he described the plight of *lomdei Torah* in the Soviet Union, and he appealed to the assembled crowd to respond generously with their support. His words made a strong impression. The crowd began giving eagerly—hands stretched out from every direction, ready to offer their donations. In a very short time, nearly \$800 was collected.

“Rabbi Fein then addressed the crowd. In heartfelt words, he introduced the honored guest—the Lubavitcher Rebbe. Rabbi Fein had known the Rebbe from his days in Russia and had interesting things to say about the matter.

“When the figure of the Lubavitcher Rebbe appeared, it was as if the whole Shul was electrified. Everyone rose from their seats as one. And when he began to speak, there reigned an absolute silence, so that one could hear a pin drop.”¹⁴



די זוערטער האט דער הייליגער לייטויטשער
רבי נזיאנט איבערגענדין די מיטבע
ווען ער איז געווען איז סט. גואים.
אייך ניב אייך די מיטבע, און האפֿ איז
בוכות אבוחוי הקרוישים, וועט יעדערר וואט
וועט האבען די מיטבע וועט בעהיט ווערטן פון
צער איז ניבענשט ווערטן מיט בני, חי, וטזון.”

WHILE IN S. LOUIS, THE FRIERDIKER REBBE SET UP A COMMITTEE TO BUILD A MIKVAH AND GAVE A COLLECTION OF PENNIES TO BE DISTRIBUTED TO THE DONORS. THEY WERE DISTRIBUTED ALONGSIDE THIS POCKET-SIZE IMAGE AND THE TEXT OF THE FRIERDIKER REBBE'S SPECIAL BRACHA.

In Philadelphia:

“A particularly moving scene unfolded when the Lubavitcher Rebbe himself rose to speak. Out of respect, the entire audience stood up—and remained standing for the entire duration of his speech. Among other things, the Rebbe remarked that in general, we need less talk and more action—and that this is especially true when speaking about the Jews in Russia.”¹⁵

In S. Louis:

“The Rebbe himself was the final speaker, and he surprised everyone with his beautiful, almost literary Yiddish. He spoke about the state of Yiddishkeit in America, explaining that despite all the challenges and obstacles, it could—and must—flourish.”¹⁶

After the reception in S. Louis, the community leaders told the Frierdiker Rebbe that this type of attentiveness was unheard of.

AMERICA OF FAITH

Throughout his visit, the Frierdiker Rebbe spoke with deep admiration for the United States—its freedoms, its values, and the kindness shown by its government. The Frierdiker Rebbe was always careful to respect the customs and the laws of the land.

One example from the visit to Milwaukee:

When Chassidim wanted to bring *mashke* to a *farbrengen*, the Frierdiker Rebbe firmly prohibited it. At the time, America was in the midst of Prohibition, when alcohol was strictly outlawed. There would be no *mashke* at his *farbrengen*.¹⁷

A unique event took place the day he arrived in Philadelphia. The first stop was Independence Hall—birthplace of American liberty, where the newspapers described an unusual scene:

“Mr. Thatcher escorted the Rebbe into Independence Hall and invited him to sit in the very chair where George Washington had once sat.

“Seated in that chair, the Rebbe offered a blessing for the American government and expressed strong praise for the U.S. Constitution. ‘This was my very first wish upon arriving in America—to see the cradle of American freedom,’ the Rebbe said.

“Afterward, the Rebbe was escorted with great ceremony to the Liberty Bell, where he laid a beautiful

laurel wreath and remarked: ‘Freedom that is founded on religion is the strongest kind of freedom.’”¹⁸

The image of the Frierdiker Rebbe laying a wreath seems surprising and quite unusual. Interestingly, the Frierdiker Rebbe himself described this moment in a letter to Rebbetzin Nechama Dina—and the press report, including the Frierdiker Rebbe’s words, turned out to be remarkably accurate.

The Frierdiker Rebbe writes that they handed him a wreath of flowers to place near the bell, and he noticed that at that moment, everyone became very solemn. In the eyes of the crowd, it was a very serious moment. He laid the wreath, and said (as recorded in the letter), “*החירות המיסודה על האמונה היא הנכונה והחזקת ביחס*” Freedom that is founded on faith is the truest and strongest form of freedom.”¹⁹

At the close of his visit to America, the Frierdiker Rebbe even traveled to Washington D.C., where he visited President Herbert Hoover at the White House for the express purpose of thanking him.

“The visit,” one reporter quoted Rashag, “was to thank the president for the freedom America gives its Jewish citizens, and for the interest shown by the government in Jewish affairs overseas. The president’s friendly reception was another demonstration, says Rabbi Gurary, that Yidden and Yiddishkeit have a great future here.”



GEORGE WASHINGTON'S CHAIR AND THE LIBERTY BELL IN INDEPENDENCE HALL, AROUND THE TIME OF THE FRIERDIKER REBBE'S VISIT.



THE FRIERDIKER REBBE WITH RASHAG IN FRONT OF THE WHITE HOUSE.

There had been several visitors over the previous years; when Rav Kook visited, only half the hall was filled. When Chaim Weizmann came, it was better, but there were still plenty of empty seats. But when the Frierdiker Rebbe's visit was publicized, one thousand tickets were sold on the very first day. An estimated 3,200 people attended, inside and outside the shul.

In private letters, the Frierdiker Rebbe wrote about the enthusiasm, but noted that "In America, they warm up quickly and they cool off quickly as well. One must quickly seize the moment."¹⁶

A Voice of Comfort

Despite the thousands who thronged to see the Frierdiker Rebbe, the financial response was disappointing. Rabbi Yisroel Jacobson later wrote that the leaders of the Joint Distribution Committee feared the Frierdiker Rebbe's tremendous influence and actively worked to limit his contact with America's wealthy Jews.²⁰

But the real problem was America's economic situation.

Just a few months after the Frierdiker Rebbe arrived, the stock market crashed, plunging the country into the Great Depression. Businesses collapsed, people lost their livelihoods, and many Jews were left unemployed. Now, it was the Frierdiker Rebbe who was offering them encouragement.

Mr. Isador Starr, who was a young man at the time, recalled a beautiful moment during the Frierdiker Rebbe's visit to Detroit:

One morning, the Frierdiker Rebbe made a surprise visit to the *Nusach Ari* shul. During his visit, he spoke about the economic crisis and urged the people not to lose hope—the downturn was only temporary, and America would return to prosperity.

"Then," writes Mr. Starr, "the Rebbe started to speak again slowly in his characteristic low voice. 'I am glad to see you in Shul. Stick to the Shul ("halt zich"). Stick to the Torah and stick to each other.'"

The Frierdiker Rebbe elaborated:

"In Shul, you will feel close to G-d... if a man can study a Blatt Gemara, very good; if he can study a Perek Mishnayos, very good; if he can only study a Parsha Chumash with Rashi, still very good. And if nothing else, certainly you can say a Kapitel Tehillim, and that, too, is very important."

Then he added:

"Even if you just sit together and eat a piece of her-ring with a baked potato or 'make a Shnapps' and wish



A NOTICE ANNOUNCING THE FRIERDIKER REBBE'S DELIVERY OF A MAAMAR AT THE NUSACH ARI SHUL IN S. LOUIS.

each other 'L'Chayim' ...that, too, is worshipping G-d. The Mitzvah of *V'Ahavta L'rei'acha Kamocha* is an *ikar*, a cardinal principle, in Torah, and its observance is of extreme importance."

"It was spoken in his low voice, but with overwhelming conviction," writes Mr. Starr, "and one would have to see the faces of the people to realize and appreciate the deep impression it made upon them."²¹

A Rebbe Says Chassidus

On Shabbosim and special days, the Frierdiker Rebbe delivered *maamarim* and held farbrengens. Sometimes these were held in large public spaces, directed at the broader public, and some were quieter occasions, held in the Frierdiker Rebbe's accommodations.

"One weekday," writes Rabbi Jacobson, "at Reb Mendel Lokshin's Tzemach Tzedek shul, the Rebbe said Chassidus. The shul was filled to capacity; several hundred people were unable to enter and stood outside in the street. Estimates suggested a crowd of close to 5,000 people.

"It was assumed that the Rebbe would first go to the

TISHREI IN AMERICA

Tishrei was just a few weeks away when the Frierdiker Rebbe arrived. A delegation arrived from Congregation Agudas Achim Anshei Lubavitch, a Nusach Ari shul in Brownsville with 1200 members, asking for the honor of hosting the Frierdiker Rebbe for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. The Frierdiker Rebbe agreed.

When the Frierdiker Rebbe approached the shul, bedecked in his *kapote* and *spodik*, the streets were packed. Every window and balcony had onlookers. The shul itself was packed to the rafters.

It was a true Rosh Hashanah in Lubavitch. The Frierdiker Rebbe davened that evening for three hours, and one thousand people remained there until the very end, waiting to wish the Frierdiker Rebbe *l'shana tovah*. During *tekios* (the Frierdiker Rebbe said the *pesukim* and the *brachos*) and during the *maamarim* of the second night and *motzei yom tov*, the crowd spilled out onto the street.²²

Twenty years later, one of the *mispalelim* reminded Rabbi Jacobson of that Rosh Hashanah. “I’ll never forget that davening on the night of Rosh Hashanah,” he said. “The heartrending cries—it felt as if the walls of the shul were crying with him.”²³

Yom Kippur was spent in a similar manner; the Frierdiker Rebbe actually remained in the shul for the full 24 hours.



THE SHUL IN BROWNSVILLE WHERE THE FRIERDIKER REBBE DAVENED FOR THE YOMIM NORAIM, 5690.

Sukkos and Simchas Torah were celebrated at the Frierdiker Rebbe’s accommodations, a large home in Crown Heights on the corner of Brooklyn Avenue and Prospect Place. People thronged to the home throughout Yom Tov and Chol Hamoed, and the Frierdiker Rebbe held several farbrengens.

On the night of Simchas Torah, the Frierdiker Rebbe recounts in a letter, he sat at his place facing the front wall as the *Ata Horeisas* were sold, and made a firm decision that these *Hakafos* would be no different than those in Lubavitch.

“We did the first *hakafa* and the seventh in the usual way. The crowd sang with such energy, with very good *niggunim* and great enthusiasm—it lifted the entire street. Despite the late hour, a massive crowd filled the street. They say there were children brought by their parents—older ones standing and watching, and younger ones lifted in their arms. Passersby and people from nearby buildings stopped to see what was going on.”²⁴ After *Hakafos*, the Frierdiker Rebbe washed for the *seudah* and farbrenged for the rest of the night. The farbreng ended at 7:30 a.m.

America, everyone agreed, had never seen anything like it.



THE HOME IN CROWN HEIGHTS WHERE THE FRIERDIKER REBBE SPENT SUKKOS AND SIMCHAS TORAH.

mizrach to greet the *rabbanim* and community leaders waiting there. But instead, police had to forcefully carve a path through the crowd just to get him to the *bima*. The Rebbe ascended the platform, sat in the chair, and began the *maamar* in a thunderous voice that rang out through the entire shul—and even beyond.”

After a *maamar* in Milwaukee, the Frierdiker Rebbe wrote in his letter to Rebbetzin Nechama Dina, Reb Chatche Feigin and Reb Moshe Horenshtain reported that the *maamar* really ‘took’ the crowd.

“Those who attended reported that everyone understood something, and even during those parts they didn’t understand, they felt a sweetness and *geshmak*. In the *maamar*, I explained two *pesukim*, illustrating them with real-life examples in spoken Yiddish. People kept repeating it afterward.

“There are a number of Jews here, in their forties and fifties, originally from our region—Vitebsk province—who, in their youth, had visited Lubavitch with their fathers...

“This visit awakened something deep inside them. It shook them. At the first talk I gave (so they say), they were completely *farloren*, overwhelmed. They wept hysterically, and said *Shehecheyanu* through tears of both joy and pain...”²⁵

Everyone agreed that the visits had a deep and profound impact on the communities.

“The Boston visit of the Lubavitcher Rebbe,” said the Morgen Journal, “was a tremendous moral and spiritual success. Every one of his appearances was *b’rov am hadras melech’dig*. His headquarters at 104 Crawford Street became, from the moment he arrived until the moment he departed, a true *tel talpiyos*. Young and old, rich and poor, Chassidim and *misnagdim* alike came to see the Lubavitcher Rebbe and to hear *chassidus*.²⁶

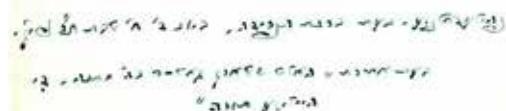
The Rebbe They’d Never Seen

When the Frierdiker Rebbe arrived in Chicago, a reporter for the *Courier* magazine noticed an elderly, grey-bearded Jew standing at the edge of the train tracks. He looked to be in his nineties. At his side stood a young boy—his great-grandson—and several middle-aged men, his sons.

“The elderly man stretched his eyes toward the direction of the train. His worn, weathered face was lit up with joy. It was as if he had become young again.”



KEHOT PUBLICATION SOCIETY



A RECENTLY RELEASED PHOTOGRAPH OF THE FRIERDIKER REBBE ADDRESSING THE CROWD AT A SHUL IN PHILADELPHIA, DURING A LARGE FAREWELL EVENT HELD FOR HIM WITH 1000 PEOPLE. THE NEXT DAY, THE FRIERDIKER REBBE SENT THE PHOTO TO REBBETZIN NECHAMA DINA, NOTING THAT AS THE PICTURE WAS TAKEN AS HE WAS SAYING THE FOLLOWING WORDS:
האלת שטארק גאטיטס ב”ה מותנה, די היליגע תורה
“HOLD ON STRONG TO THE GIFT THAT HASHEM HAS GIVEN YOU—THE HOLY TORAH.”

Excitedly, the old man leaned over to the reporter and explained his emotions:

“I want to see the Rebbe—a grandson of my Rebbe. I still remember the radiant face of my Rebbe, the Rebbe Maharash. Oy, what a face he had! One glance from him gave me newfound strength. You want to know why I’ve lived so long? Every time I saw him, I felt as though I had gained ten more years of life. I also knew his son, the Rebbe Rashab. And now... now I’ll be able to make a *Shehecheyanu*...”

“The old grey-bearded chossid broke down in tears like a small child, and then, with youthful passion, he began

to dance like a young chossid. He had received new life.”²⁷

Many Chassidim, or descendants of Chassidim, found new life in this visit. In one letter, the Frierdiker Rebbe describes a farbrengen in Milwaukee which had 25 or 30 attendees who had personally visited Lubavitch, Kapust, or Liady, the ‘courts’ that had splintered off Lubavitch after the *histalkus* of the Tzemach Tzedek (the Rebbe of Babroisk, the last surviving branch of Kapust, had passed away just seven years earlier).²⁸

“The Chabad Chassidim,” writes one reporter, “who had always spoken with reverence and love about the Lubavitch dynasty, the Lubavitch court, and the Lubavitcher Rebbeim, were now meeting, for the first time, the Rebbe they had never seen in person.

“Not only were they completely convinced that everything they had imagined about the Rebbe was true—they now realized that all they had remembered didn’t even scratch the surface. The impression the Rebbe made on them was extraordinary. Very few could even find words to express what they were feeling. They were entirely under the influence of the Rebbe’s powerful spiritual presence.”²⁹

Naturally, as the unforgettable visit drew to a close, the Chassidim began to hope that the Rebbe might stay in America. A committee was formed, and they approached the Rebbe with their request. If only they would be *zocher*...

What they didn’t know was that the Frierdiker Rebbe was already giving the idea serious thought. The goal of raising awareness about Russia was accompanied by the goal of scouting out America as a possible place to live. In a letter written by his father-in-law, Reb Avraham Schneerson, it is spoken of almost as a certainty—it was going to happen; only a few practical matters still needed to be resolved.

Ultimately, however, the Frierdiker Rebbe decided to return to Europe—at least for the time being. In an interview with a reporter, he explained that he could not bring himself to settle so far from the Jews of Russia. He could not abandon them.

Later, the Frierdiker Rebbe shared another reason with Rabbi Jacobson: he had come to America in the capacity of an *askan tziburi*—a communal activist—but, as he put it, “*mein inyan iz Chassidim un Chassidus*, my [true] mission is Chassidim and Chassidus.”

Years later, having returned to America, the Frierdiker Rebbe offered yet another explanation. “I saw the *minhag hamedina*,” he said, “a culture in which even the pure of heart feel the need to conform to society’s norms, where



even *rabbanim* follow the idolatry of ‘that’s just how things are done here.’ It’s not hard to imagine what kind of influence a rabbi can have when he himself is clean-shaven...”³⁰

The time was yet to come.

The Departure

“Last night, the Newton Hotel on the bustling Broadway street near 96th Street was transformed into a true Chassidic court. Hundreds of Chassidim gathered, singing soulful Chassidic *niggunim*, a festive meal was held, and one of the most prominent Chassidic leaders of our time—the Lubavitcher Rebbe—delivered words of Torah. The crowd of Chassidim listened intently, hanging on to every word.”³¹

It was the final days of the Frierdiker Rebbe’s visit, and New York’s Jews were utilizing every moment.

“For a while, the Rebbe sat deep in thought. The entire crowd—men and even several women who had somehow managed to slip into the hall—stood in total silence, ears sharply attuned. Some climbed onto benches for a better view, straining to hear what the Rebbe would say. He spoke quietly, yet everyone could hear.

“‘Until I came to America,’ the Rebbe began, ‘I always had an excuse for American Chassidim. I figured there was a difference between the ‘alte heim’ and the ‘new home.’

“But over these few months that I’ve spent here in America, I’ve become convinced that there is no difference. The new home is just like the old one when it comes to Torah and *mitzvos*. Anyone who truly wants to be a frum Jew—to daven three times a day and observe all the *mitzvos* properly—can absolutely do so here, just as they could back in the old country.”

“The problem doesn’t lie with America. The problem lies with us. We’ve grown too used to *heteirim*; day by day, we give up more and more from learning Torah and Chassidus, and from observing *mitzvos*.³²”

As he prepared to leave the United States, the Frierdiker Rebbe made it clear that America had immense potential. A journalist who interviewed the Frierdiker Rebbe noted that in contrast to other *rabbanim*, who spoke negatively about the state of American Jewry, the Frierdiker Rebbe was optimistic.

“The young here absorb and thirst for Yiddishkeit,” says the Rebbe. “The youth is turning back to its Jewish roots. All they lack is knowledge, education.”

The Rebbe adds, “Those who wish to, can make their new life in America resemble their old life overseas.” The Rebbe is fully confident that it will happen. “The American Jews will not only support the yeshivas and Torah centers across the ocean; they will also establish and maintain their own yeshivas and Torah centers here.”³³

1. Letter of the Frierdiker Rebbe to Rebbetzin Nechama Dina, 21 Elul 5689.
2. For more on the state of Yiddishkeit and Chassidus in the early days of America, see “Sacks-Full of Mesiras Nefesh,” *Derher Iyar* 5784.
3. *Zikaron Livnei Yisrael* p. 165.
4. Account of Mr. Issador Starr, published in *Bikur Ch”k Admu”r Haraya”tz L’Ir Detroit* p. 10.
5. *Toldos Chabad B’Artzos Habris* p. 45–46.
6. *Toldos Chabad B’Artzos Habris* p. 65.
7. *Toldos Chabad B’Artzos Habris* p. 85.
8. *Toldos Chabad B’Artzos Habris* p. 61.
9. Account of Mr. Issador Starr, published in *Bikur Ch”k Admu”r Haraya”tz L’Ir Detroit* p. 11.
10. *Toldos Chabad B’Artzos Habris* p. 62.
11. *Toldos Chabad B’Artzos Habris* p. 64.
12. *Zikaron Livnei Yisrael* p. 181.
13. *Toldos Chabad B’Artzos Habris* p. 74. *Bikur K”k Admu”r Haraya”tz L’Ir Detroit*.
14. *Toldos Chabad B’Artzos Habris* p. 63.
15. *Toldos Chabad B’Artzos Habris* p. 71.
16. Frierdiker Rebbe’s letter to Rebbetzin Nechama Dina, 6 Iyar 5690.
17. Frierdiker Rebbe’s letter to Rebbetzin Nechama Dina, 11 Adar 5690.
18. *Toldos Chabad B’Artzos Habris* pg. 61.
19. Frierdiker Rebbe’s letter to Rebbetzin Nechama Dina, 15 Kislev 5690.
20. *Zikaron Livnei Yisrael* 184.
21. Account of Mr. Issador Starr, published in *Bikur K”k Admu”r Haraya”tz L’Ir Detroit* p. 14.
22. Frierdiker Rebbe’s letter to Rebbetzin Nechama Dina, Motzaei Rosh Hashanah 5690.
23. *Zikaron Livnei Yisrael* p. 173.
24. Frierdiker Rebbe’s letter to Rebbetzin Nechama Dina, Isru Chag Simchas Torah 5690.
25. Frierdiker Rebbe’s letter to Rebbetzin Nechama Dina, 11 Adar 5690.
26. *Toldos Chabad B’Artzos Habris* p. 83.
27. *Toldos Chabad B’Artzos Habris* p. 68.
28. Frierdiker Rebbe’s letter to Rebbetzin Nechama Dina, 11 Adar 5690.
29. *Toldos Chabad B’Artzos Habris* p. 99.
30. *Toldos Chabad B’Artzos Habris* pp. 92–94.
31. *Toldos Chabad B’Artzos Habris* p. 85.
32. *Toldos Chabad B’Artzos Habris* p. 87.



A NEWSPAPER CLIPPING (FROM THE COURIER MAGAZINE) SHOWS THE FRIERDIKER REBBE DURING HIS TIME IN CHICAGO.

Although the Frierdiker Rebbe was returning to Europe for the time being, he left a clear message with the Chassidim: Strengthen Yiddishkeit. Spread Chassidus. Uplift the spiritual state of American Jewry—and the day will come.

The center of Chabad-Lubavitch would one day be transplanted to American soil. T

לזכות

הה' לוי יצחק, חנה, הה' משה
פנחס, הה' ישראאל אריה ליב,
מאיר שלמה, רפאל שייחיו

נדפס ע"י

הוריהם הרה"ת ר' מנחם מענדל
זוגתו מרת ברכה שייחיו
טעלדן

By: Rabbi Shneur Itzinger

Step Inside

Farbrengen with the Rebbe — A Companion

A guide to the Farbengen of
Chof Mar-Cheshvan 5745



Hisvaaduyos 5745,
vol. 1, pp. 593-636



Sources

This guide is designed to assist in experiencing the farbrengens on video or audio recording. Timestamps correspond to the video of the farbrengens, linked above.

C

hof Cheshvan 5745 was the 124th birthday of the Rebbe Rashab *yu"l*. As was often the case, the Rebbe held a farbengen on the day.

In the opening *sicha* (not covered in this column), the Rebbe explains an important point: If we celebrated Chof Cheshvan last year, and the year before that—what are we doing here again? This is a “typical” opening *sicha* of a farbrengen marking a calendar event, and the Rebbe demonstrates how we can take the lesson of the day and make it relevant again, each and every year, with new and timely lessons.

At the conclusion of the *sicha*, the Rebbe mentions the Rebbe Rashab’s famous directive that we be *neros l'ha'ir*, illuminating our surroundings with Torah.

The second *sicha*, covered in this column, opens with this point, and the Rebbe poses a question.

In the early days of Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim, on Simchas Torah 5661, the Rebbe Rashab delivered a passionate and landmark *sicha*. He charged the *temimim* with being *neros l'ha'ir*, to illuminate their surroundings and serve as soldiers in the battle of *milchemes Beis Dovid*.¹

The Rebbe Rashab’s directive about being *neros l'ha'ir* was not said today. It was not said in this country, or to people of similar stature. Is it really the lesson of the day, for here and now?

Sicha 2: Hafatzas Hamaayanos— From Elites to Everyone

1. Lubavitch to Brooklyn

41:30

The Rebbe begins with a central question: What is the relevance of the Rebbe Rashab’s message today, under very different circumstances than then?

- The Rebbe Rashab taught that we must be *neros l'ha'ir*, as elaborated in his famous *sicha* addressing the *bochurim* in Tomchei Temimim.
- Today, we are in Brooklyn.
- The audience at this farbrengen is not only *bochurim*.
 - » Most, especially when including those listening from afar, are not *bochurim*.

How is this calling relevant to us today?

MILCHEMES BEIS DOVID

In the Rebbe Rashab’s *sicha*, he elaborates on the mission of the *temimim* to bring Moshiach. With Moshiach’s famous proclamation that he will appear when the Baal Shem Tov’s teachings are spread, *beis dovid* means revealing Moshiach ben Dovid—spreading the teachings and ways of Chassidus.

The *milchemes beis dovid* is the war the *temimim* have to fight against the foreign winds of secularism, by strengthening *emuna* in Moshiach’s arrival through learning and spreading Chassidus.

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2. Kohanim's Avoda to Service for All

42:56

The Rebbe steps back from the original question to show how this idea applies across other areas, too. Just as the mission once given to *temimim* has become relevant to all, so too the *avoda* once limited to kohanim in the Beis HaMikdash now falls to every Jew.

- The same question can be asked in other matters too.
- Take *davening*, the first *avoda* of the day:
 - [*Davening* is not just the beginning of the day—every part of our *tefilos* sets the tone for what follows.]
 - » The day begins with *davening*,
 - » is followed by learning,
 - » and then by going out into the world.
- Operating within the world, a key part of our *avoda*, itself has a few levels:
 - » Using the world as a “*hechsher mitzvah*”—a tool that aids *kedusha*, or as the mitzvah itself.
- The final stage is *Maariv*, followed by *Krias Shema*, when we make a *cheshbon* of the day.
- In the *korbanos* parallel: *Krias Shema* can be compared to *terumas hadeshen*—removing ashes from the *mizbeach*.²
 - » This was performed each morning, but what was removed were the remains of the previous day's *korbanos*.
- *Krias Shema* and *Maariv* likewise serve as both:
 - » A *cheshbon* of the previous day, and the beginning of the next.

Now, we return to examining our *davening* structure:]

- *Davening* is in place of the *korban tamid*,³
- which involved different roles: *kohanim*, *leviyim*, and *yisraelim*.
- Yet in *davening*, there are no distinctions. Every Jew says the same *tefilos*.
- Why have we mixed it all together? If *tefilos* parallel *korbanos*, shouldn't each person recite the parts matching their role in the *korbanos*?
 - » (True, these separate *tefilos* would need to be interconnected, like the various parts of

FOR THE SAKE OF HEAVEN, FOR HEAVEN ITSELF

As creations of Hashem placed in this world, we are meant to interact with the physical realm in a holy way. There are two levels of elevating the world so that not only does it not hinder our *avodas Hashem*, it becomes a part of it.

“*Kol ma'asecha yiheyu l'sheim shanimayim*”—all you do should be for the sake of Heaven—is a mindset of viewing the physical as a *hechsher mitzvah*: something with no intrinsic value, usable for good.

Deeper yet is “*Bechol drachecha da'ehu*”—know Him in all your ways. This teaches that the *drachecha* themselves, our worldly and physical interactions, can become holy in their own right. Interacting with the world is not a necessary evil; it is the very means by which we create a home for Hashem in this world as He intended.

KORBAN ROLES

While the main responsibility for bringing *korbanos* belonged to the kohanim, all other Jews, the *leviyim* and *Yisraelim*, took part as well.

The *leviyim* accompanied the offerings with musical instruments and song.

Yisraelim were divided into groups, with specially designated *anshei ma'amad* representing the rest of the Jewish people during the daily *korban tamid*.⁴

the *korbanos* all took place together, though divided among various areas of the *azara*.)

- » Furthermore, if one were to differentiate between parts of *davening*, he would not fulfill his obligation.
- To summarize: the fixed *nusach of tefilla* is recited equally by all Jews, regardless of

tribe. Unlike the *korbanos*, there are no role-based variations. Why?

- » *Birkas Kohanim* is indeed an exception, but it is not in the sections of *tefilla* that correspond to *korbanos*.

3. Our Loss is Our Gain

49:50

The loss of the Beis HaMikdash brought about a gain: the elite avoda once reserved for kohanim is now in everyone's hands.

- “*Tefilla* is in place of *korbanos*” means that every Jew, through *davening*, accomplishes what was once possible only with a *korban*.
- In the Beis HaMikdash, a *kohen* acted on your behalf. Now, you do it yourself.
- This is a true case of “our loss is our gain”: Not having the Beis HaMikdash means that any Jew, *kohen*, *levi*, or *yisroel*, can now fulfill the roles that once belonged to just one group.
- The *possuk* says: *Uneshalma parim sefaseinu*⁶—the service of our lips replaces sacrificial animals.
 - » *Uneshalma* can mean “make up for” (*mashlim*), or, more strongly, “fulfill completely” (*shleimus*).
- To summarize: any individual, even a *levi* or *yisrael*, through *tefilla*,

4. The “General Souls” of Yesteryear

53:14

The Rebbe cites another example of how our generation has lesser strengths than those before.

- When the Jews left Egypt, the *eirev rav* went out with them.⁷
- On a basic level, this refers to people from other nations.
- But the Zohar explains the word “*rav*”—רָב (with the *gematria* of 202) alludes to the 202 holy *nitzutzos* that were elevated in Egypt.
 - » The Alter Rebbe quotes this *Zohar*,⁸ making it accessible to all.

THE SILVER LINING IN DESTRUCTION

Although the destruction of the Beis Hamikdash was, of course, a negative event, certain benefits have emerged from it. This is based on the Gemara's phrasing: *קלוקלו זהו תיקנו*.⁵

One example the Rebbe often cites is that in the Beis Hamikdash, *simchas beis hashoeva* began only on *Chol Hamoed* when instruments were permitted. In contrast, today we begin celebrating from the start of *Sukkos*.

In the context of this *sicha*, the loss of the Beis Hamikdash enables every Jew to take part in bringing *korbanos*.

accomplishes what only many Jews, including *kohanim*, could once do.

- This is possible because while *korbanos* affected the physical world, the actual animal, our *davening* affects only the spiritual.

Precisely because the effectiveness of our avoda was diminished with the loss of the Beis HaMikdash, we can all take part in korbanos—“our loss is our gain.”

- Our *avoda* in this world, the world of *tikkun*, is to elevate the 288 fallen sparks from *tohu*.
- Of those, 202 were elevated in Egypt.
- The Alter Rebbe asks: If 202 sparks were elevated in 210 years in Egypt, why has it taken thousands of years to elevate the remaining 86?
 - » True, Egyptian exile was more challenging, with slavery offering greater opportunities for refinement.
 - » But that doesn't explain the large

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discrepancy: 202 sparks in 210 years, and fewer than 86 in the thousands of years since!

- The answer: Jews in earlier generations had more powerful, general souls.
- Each soul could elevate an *entire* spark, with all its components.
- Our souls are not as “general” or lofty—their power is more limited, and we elevate only a portion of each spark.

5. Spreading the Power

57:18

Using the example of *birur ha'nitzutzos*, the Rebbe returns to explain why davening is now a universal obligation.

- In general, each generation experiences *yeridas ha'doros*—a spiritual descent.
 - » The Beis HaMikdash especially illuminated the world.
- In earlier times, each *avoda* was a complete process in itself.
- Each individual could use his lofty soul to elevate an entire *nitzutz*.
- Each *avoda* of a *kohen*, *levi*, or *yisroel* elevated an entire spark.

IT STARTS IN PETERBURG

After the Alter Rebbe's geulah on Yud Tes Kislev 5559, his Chassidus took on a new form, becoming more explained and developed within the framework of intellect.

This shift, referred to by the Rabbeim as “*noch Peterburg*” (after the arrest in S. Petersburg), is clearly seen in the printed *maamarim* of the Alter Rebbe. *Hafatzas Hamayanos* also gained new urgency.

[The *Sefer HaTanya* is a notable exception, published two years before Yud Tes Kislev in a similar detailed style to the teachings that would come later.]¹⁰

- Today, we elevate only a *prat*, a small component of a spark with each action.
- This limited process doesn't require a *kohen*.
- It is enough that each Jew contains within themselves elements of all other Jews, and can elevate sparks through *davening* alone.

*With our souls diminished, we no longer elevate entire sparks, only parts of them. This is why any Jew, even a *yisroel*, can share the *kohen's* role, fulfilling through davening what was once done through korbanos.*

6. Join the Hafatza Club—Open to All!

59:15

With this background, the Rebbe returns to the original point of the *sicha*: the mission once given by the Rebbe Rashab to an elite few is now the task of everyone.

- Let's look at the history of Chassidus, beginning with the Baal Shem Tov.
- In the early days, there were many “streams”; each student of the Baal Shem Tov and Maggid had a distinct role in spreading Chassidus.
- The Maggid had sixty students, each tasked with spreading Chassidus in a particular region or country.
 - » Another version states that the Baal Shem Tov had sixty students, while the Maggid had 120.

- Some of them were especially devoted to spreading Chassidus, excelling in *hafatzas hamayanos*.
- But not all emphasized it as their specific focus to the point of *mesirus nefesh*.
 - » Between the Baal Shem Tov and Maggid themselves, we see this difference: The Baal Shem Tov traveled, while the Maggid taught from his place, and his students came to him.⁹
- Similarly, in the *sicha* of *Kol Hayotzei*, the Rebbe Rashab initially tasked only the early *temimim* with spreading Chassidus, making them the “general souls” with special strengths for *hafatzas hamayanos*.

- At the time, this mission was limited to a select few: the *bochurim* in the *yeshiva*.
- The circumstances weren't right for others, outside Lubavitch and Tomchei Temimim, to get involved.
- Over time, as *hafatzas hamaayanos* continued,
 - » following the principle of *maalin bakodesh*,
 - » especially "after Peterburg,"
- the *chutza* is more ready for learning and spreading Chassidus.

In other words;

- Previously, it was enough to have a small group spreading Chassidus.
- Today, as time passes,
 - » and Lubavitch endured many exiles and relocations,
- this task now belongs to all, even to those who, externally, are *baalei batim*.
- Each person is empowered to be a *ner l'ha'ir* and spread Chassidus.

7. Forewarning the Future

1:05:05

Another point: the *sicha* itself hints that a time would come when everyone would be needed to fight the war of Beis Dovid.

- The Rebbe Rashab, in that very *sicha*, spoke about future dangers from forces opposing Yiddishkeit.
- He quoted the pasuk: "חַרְפָּו אָוְבִּיךְ רַקְפָּו עֲקָבּוֹת מִשְׁרָקָה" ¹² and said there will be two generations:
 - » Those who oppose Hashem.
 - » Those who oppose the footsteps of Moshiach.
- In the generation of *cheirfu ikvos meshichecha*, it's not enough for just a few to counteract opposition. The whole generation is needed to fight *milchemes Beis Dovid*.
- This is reflected in the Friediker Rebbe's devotion to *hafatzas hamaayanos* with greater *mesirus nefesh* than even his father, bringing Chassidus to farther places than before.

THE WARS BEFORE MOSHIACH

The Rebbe Rashab describes two levels of *ikvesa d'meshicha* that must be combated. The first are those who oppose Yiddishkeit, opening "dangerous schools" that, *Rachmana lit-zan*, pull children away from Torah.

The second are the *frumme Yidden* who lack a strong *emuna* in Moshiach's arrival.¹¹

AXE TO WOOD!

An expression used by the Rabbeim to convey concrete action is the Russian "טַאפָּאַרְוּ דָא פְּלָאַכְוּ"—axe on wood. It's not enough to swing the axe; it has to land on the wood for the job to get done. Studying Chassidus alone is not enough; the main thing is the action, the bottom line.¹³

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- In other words;
- True, the *sicha* was delivered to a specific audience, at a specific time.
 - » They even saw the Rebbe Rashab say it in person.
- But the *sicha* itself foretells that one day this mission will expand.
- When that time comes, anyone to whom the *sicha* becomes accessible carries the responsibility.
 - » The very fact that you are aware of this *sicha* is *hashgacha pratis*.
 - » The Rebbe charging you with this job gives you the strength to actualize it.
- This includes negating the *cheirfu ikvos meshichecha*—
 - » Who, though observant of Torah and *mitzvos*, don't accept speaking openly

about Moshiach's imminent arrival.

- The *sicha* is not limited to those who heard it directly or those in similar circumstances. It is everyone's responsibility.
- As expressed in the many forms of the Frierdiker Rebbe's *mesirus nefesh* to spread Chassidus:
 - » *Avoda maamarim* and *Haskala maamarim*, in multiple languages, making Chassidus (and the mission of *hafatzas hamaayanos*) accessible to *all*.
- One might ask: how can we accomplish what the Chassidim of the past did?
 - » They saw the Rebbe Rashab directly; we

only hear about him and his words.

The answer:

- As mentioned earlier, most of the *birur hanitzutzos* is already complete. We are finishing the final sparks.
- Within those 86 sparks, we are at the very end.
 - » Consider all the *yeridas hadoros* and *birurim* since the first *galus*:
 - ◊ The second Beis HaMikdash,
 - ◊ the *galus* that followed,
 - ◊ until today—*ikvesa d'meshicha*.

8. It Means Today!

1:11:03

The Rebbe explains the urgency of taking the Rebbe Rashab's words to heart.

- Don't let the *yetzer hara* convince you that this *sicha* only applies in certain circumstances.
- Even on a weekday, half a world away from Lubavitch, to an audience mostly not of *bochurim*, every word is applicable,
- and we have the strength to act on it.
- The Torah only demands what we are capable of.
 - » As the Gemara¹⁴ says of *gabba'ei tzedakah* who would hide from those unable to give.
- This *sicha* was not only said. It was printed and publicized by the *Rabbeim*.
- That itself gives us the strength to fulfill it.
 - » Especially today, when the Rebbe Rashab has *mazalo gover*, we have greater ability to fulfill his words.
- Extra strength brings extra responsibility.
- If the Rebbe gives us strength and it's not used, *Rachmana litzlan*, it can cause confusion in the *shlichus* of the *nossi* himself.

- This *sicha* was said to you—*bishvili nivra ha'olam*.
- Still hearing a voice in your head that says otherwise?
- That voice is your own issue. The *yetzer hara* wouldn't come up with something so absurd.
 - » As we say in *Al Chet: chatanu lefan-echa beyetzer hara*. Sometimes, we provoke the *yetzer hara*.
- No further elaboration is needed.
 - » The assumption is that every Jew will do the right thing.
- The *sicha* is printed and available, no need to chase after a *hanacha*.
- What's needed now is action.
- It's not just a "nice *vort* from the Rebbe", or about just hearing it and thereby fulfilling the mitzvah of Torah study.
- It's a mission that must be done now, overriding the mitzvah of learning Torah.

9. The Bottom Line

1:16:14

Putting the urgency into practice, the Rebbe urges influencing every Jew, at every opportunity.

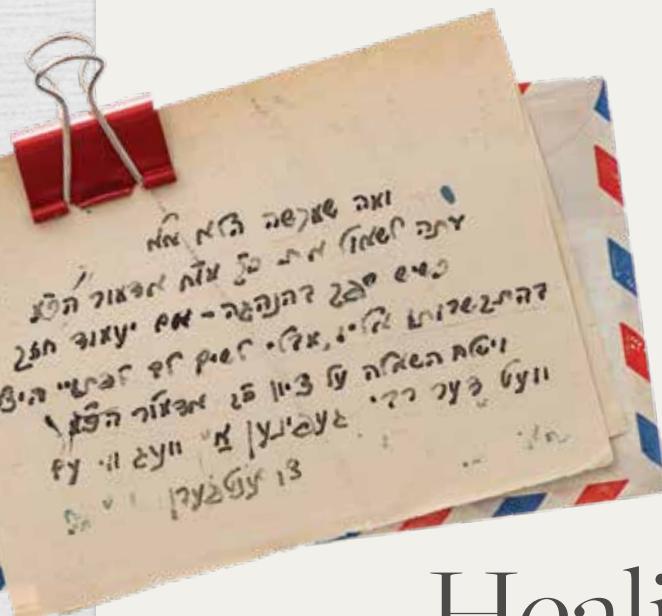
- Whenever you meet a fellow Jew, you might think you know the reason.
- But whether or not that's the real reason, the definite reason is—*hafatzas hamaayanos*.

Then	Now
Simchas Torah 5661 – Lubavitch <i>Temimim</i> in <i>tomchei temimim</i>	Chof Cheshvan 5745 – Brooklyn <i>bochurim</i> and <i>baalei batim</i>
<i>Korbanos</i> : <i>kohanim</i> , <i>leviyim</i> , and <i>yisraelim</i> had different roles	Davening replaces <i>korbanos</i> , with no distinctions
<i>Korbanos</i> affected the physical world	<i>Davening</i> affects only the spiritual
Elevated 202 sparks	Elevating 86 sparks
General souls elevated an entire <i>nitzutz</i> A <i>kohen</i> was needed to elevate the <i>nitzutz</i>	More limited souls elevate only a <i>prat</i> The <i>kohen</i> within each individual suffices
Talmidim of Baal Shem Tov and Maggid were not all specifically involved in <i>hafatza</i> <i>Hafatza</i> was the job of the <i>temimim</i>	<i>Hafatzas hamaayanos</i> continued for many generations—now the <i>chutza</i> is more ready.
חרפו אויביך ה' First generation:	חרפו עקבות משיחך ה' Second generation:
The mission: fight <i>milchemes beis david</i> through <i>hafatzas hamaayanos</i>	

- This is the “war of Beis Dovid” in our time.
- Influencing someone must be done pleasantly,
- but *milchama*, as the Rambam says,¹⁵ is not for the faint of heart.
- You can’t remain tucked away at home.
 - » Even if your surroundings are “Lubavitch”—a holy place.

- You must go to the *chutza* and spread Chassidus.
- *Hafatzas hamaayanos* brings Moshiach.
- When *ikvesa d'meshicha* will mean literally hearing Moshiach’s footsteps approaching.
- Every Jew will leave *galus*.
- Before then, every Jew must play a part in the *Milchemes Beis Dovid*.

1. The Rebbe Rashab's *sicha* is printed in Sefer Hasichos 5702, p. 141ff. Selections can be found on the sourcesheet, sources 1–3.
2. Sefer Hama'marim 5711 of the Friediker Rebbe, p. 278.
3. Brachos 26b.
4. See sourcesheet, sources 4–6.
5. See Shabbos, 80b. See sourcesheet, sources 7–8.
6. Hoshea, 14:3.
7. Shemos, 12:38.
8. Torah Or, Parshas Bo, 60:3.
9. See HaYom Yom, 3 Kislev.
10. Sefer Hasichos Toras Sholom, p. 112ff.
11. See sourcesheet, source 2.
12. Tehillim, 89:2.
13. See sourcesheet sources 9–10.
14. Taanis 24a.
15. Hilchos Melachim, end of chap. 7.



לזכות
השלוחה ח' מושקא בת פערל גאלדא תחוי
לרגל יום הולדתה ד' מר-חשוון ולזכות
השלוחה מינא עטל בת פערל גאלדא תחוי
ט'יכטל
לרגל יום הולדתה "ב' מר-חשוון
נדפס ע"י משפחתם שיחיו

לע"ר רב ב' ווועט געפינען א ווועג...

WRITTEN BY: RABBI LEVI GREENBERG (TX)

Healing Matzah



AS TOLD BY
RABBI SHAMSHI JUNIK
(Brooklyn, NY)

On Wednesday, Yud Alef Nissan 5785 Zalmen* called me with an urgent request. He and his wife had been overseas for some time, working on a Shlichus, when his wife had a sudden medical emergency and ended up in the ICU. They had recently made the arduous trip to transfer her to a hospital in New York, and he asked me if by chance I had a small piece of matzah that I had received from the Rebbe for his wife to eat as a segulah for a full recovery.

In 5739 I had the great merit of becoming a *Mashbak* (*Meshameish Bakoidesh*) in the Rebbe's home through helping the Rebbetzin on various occasions and in 770 as well. Eventually, when the Rebbe and Rebbetzin would spend Shabbos and Yom Tov in the special apartment at the back of the library building next door to 770, I was instrumental in those arrangements.

Every year on Erev Pesach, the Rebbe distributed matzah to all Anash who were in town. In 5738, the Rebbe started distributing packages of matzah to the members of the Kollel, who later distributed pieces to all Anash who came to 770. However, a small group of people continued to receive matzah directly from the Rebbe's holy hand, either Erev Pesach or right after Maariv, right before the Seder, on both nights of Pesach. Since I was working in the Rebbe's home, I was included in this group.

When Zalmen asked me for some of the Rebbe's matzah, I told him I would think about it, and that he should call me back the next day. Although I had merited to receive matzah from the Rebbe for many years, I do not have much matzah left. As I thought about Zalmen's request, I figured that if his wife was back in the US, her

medical situation was getting better already, and I was reluctant to give him a piece.

On Thursday, my dear friend Yerachmiel Jacobson called me from Florida, where he was visiting his children for Yom Tov. He asked me if I had a crumb of the Rebbe's matzah for his grandson, who was very ill. I readily agreed, and he asked me to ship it to him overnight to Florida.

Later in the afternoon, when I went to prepare the piece of the Rebbe's Matzah to send to Florida, I noticed a small plastic bag of a piece of matzah with a note indicating that I received it on Erev Pesach 5751. Six months prior to that date, my son Shmuli was born with many health challenges. He was hospitalized for months on oxygen, and by Pesach, things were still very difficult. That year, the Rebbe distributed matzah to the small group before Yom Tov, because the first night of Yom Tov was on Shabbos.

When I approached the Rebbe, I asked for a bracha for a refuah shleima for Shmuli.

"Amen," the Rebbe replied, and after a brief pause added "b'karov"—very soon.

I decided to send a crumb of that extra special matzah, that the Rebbe gave my son a bracha for a *refuah sheleima* to Florida for Yerachmiel's grandson. As I held the matzah in my hands, Zalmen called me back. When I saw his name on my phone as I held the matzah, I didn't respond because I was busy with shipping the matzah to Florida, but I felt the Rebbe was sending me a message to give him a piece of matzah for his wife. I returned his call later and asked him to come over to my home.

When he came, I shared that I had initially decided not to share the matzah with him, but when he called me at the moment I was holding the matzah in my hand, I felt this was the Rebbe's way of directing me to give him a piece of matzah. I handed him a small piece and explained to him the significance of this matzah, which I received Erev Pesach 5751. Zalmen was overwhelmed with appreciation that I shared the matzah with him for his wife and told me that on Wednesday, Yud Alef Nissan, he was at the Ohel and wrote a letter to the Rebbe requesting a bracha for his wife's speedy recovery.

"At the end of my letter," Zalmen said, "I asked the



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ITCHEL JUNIK RECEIVES MATZAH FROM THE REBBE TOGETHER WITH HIS SISTER RAISY AND HIS FATHER, EREV PESACH 5751.

Rebbe for one request: 'could you please arrange for me to get some matzah for my wife.' When I left the Ohel, I started calling anyone I could think of, searching for a piece of the Rebbe's matzah. The Rebbe led me to the right person."

The next morning, Friday, 13 Nissan, there was a funeral at the Ohel, and as a member of the Chevra Kadisha, I volunteered to participate in it. My son Shmuli was off that day from his usual program, and he joined me on the ride to the Ohel. When we arrived, I dropped him off at the entrance of the main house and spent a few minutes parking the car.

When I entered the tent, I saw Zalmen sitting at a table writing a letter. He approached me with a huge smile and said that he was writing a letter to the Rebbe, reporting the good news that he had received a piece of matzah for his wife.

"As I was writing the details of you receiving the Rebbe's matzah and the Rebbe's bracha for Shmuli, I looked up and saw Shmuli walking into the tent and now I see you!" Zalmen marveled.

We both felt this was yet another sign that the Rebbe's special healing matzah had been delivered to the proper recipient.

YOUR STORY

Share your story with A Chassidisher Derher by emailing stories@derher.org.

BY: RABBI MENDEL JACOBS

TAKING ACTION



THE TEN
MIVTZOIM
REVISITED

MIVTZA MEZUZAH



לע"נ
ר' אברהם שמאול בן ר' משה ע"ה שפאלטר
ללב"ע כ"ד ניסן ה'תשפ"ה

ולע"נ
ר' משה חיים בן ר' ר' מאיר הארץ ע"ה
נפ' ר"ח תמוז ה'תשפ"ד
תינכ"ביה'

ולזכות הרוחינו
מרת רבקה מירל שיחיו שפאלטר
מרת שרה תורה גיינען
לארכיקות ימים ושנים טובות
מתוך בריאות הנכונה
נדפס ע"י הרה"ת ר' יצחק מאיר זוזגתו
מרת לאה ומשפחתם שייחיו
שפאלטר

"The world has become much darker in recent years," the Rebbe said when launching Mivtza Mezuzah, "in both the spiritual and the material sense. We need to counter this darkness with the one true light of goodness and holiness. Not that we should counter the darkness with an equal measure of light; what would be the point in that? The whole reason for the darkness to begin with is to awaken the Jewish people to illuminate the world many times over."

At this point, the Rebbe reiterated his previous call that every Jewish home should have a Chumash, Siddur, Tehillim, and Tzedakah box. Then the Rebbe added:

One of the main reasons for the *neshama*'s descent into this world is not only for its own benefit, but to transform the world around as well. It's not enough, then, for the Jewish home to be illuminated with Torah and *mitzvos*; we must take this campaign even further, to the outside street.

This can be accomplished through the mitzvah of mezuzah:

A mezuzah, like a Chanukah menorah, is placed outside the home, attesting to the Jewishness of the home and showing everyone in the outside world that this household follows the words found inside the mezuzah: Belief in Hashem, studying His Torah, and performing His *mitzvos*.

The Rebbe concluded with a call to action:

It is our responsibility to ensure that every Jewish home, and every room within it, has a kosher mezuzah.

Given that *mezuzos* can be very expensive, some individuals have undertaken to help offset the costs of purchasing *mezuzos* or checking old ones, easing the burden.

Best would be if they purchase the *mezuzos*, but if, for whatever reason, they are unable or unwilling to pay, they should be given a mezuzah free of charge, aside from a small symbolic amount.¹

Later in the year, the Rebbe intensified the push to bring the *mivtza* even further, due to a tragic incident where a group of twenty school children in Eretz Yisroel were killed in a horrifying terror attack.

The following Shabbos, the Rebbe revealed that a chassid in Tzfas had called, and reported that he had checked the *mezuzos* of the school in which the children studied, and found that all 17 were *possul*, a number which corresponded to the official number of victims that was announced. When the newspapers publicized the next day that the number of casualties was greater, the Rebbe asked to "inquire once again regarding the number of *mezuzos*." Upon further investigation, it was discovered that there were more rooms with four additional *mezuzos*. Two of them were definitely *possul*, and the other two were questionably *possul*!

"This doesn't mean that the tragedy struck due to a deficiency in observing *mitzvos, chas v'shalom*," the Rebbe explained. "Rather, this can be understood by the example of a soldier who goes out to battle and takes off his helmet. If the soldier gets injured from enemy fire, the enemy is obviously to blame for the tragedy. However, if the soldier had been wearing his helmet properly, he certainly would have been better protected against injury."²

After this story, the Rebbe continued and increased his call for more engagement with the *mivtzoim*, especially Mivtza Mezuzah, throughout the summer. (See *ksav yad kodesh* in sidebar).

“MY HEARTFELT PLEA”

In the summer of 5734, the Rebbe drafted this letter in his holy handwriting, with a heartfelt plea to all Jews to further spread the *mitvzoim*, especially Mivtza Mezuzah:

ב”ה, חמשה עשר בתמוז, חדש הגאולה ה’תשל”ד, שנת הקהלה-ברוקליין, ג. י.

בלשון הרוב - לכל מחכמי תורהנו הק’, שומרי מצוה, וגם את אשר בשם ישראל יכוונה ה’ עליהם חייו שלום וברכה!

בקשה נפשית להגברת חיל ולהוסיפה בכל המבצעים, מתחילה במבצע מצוזה, ולהתחליל בהוספה זו עוד לפני בין המיצרים, וגם בשבת מפקחין על עסקי רביים ופוסקים צדקה - כפושטה וברוחניות. ויהי רצון שיהפכו ימים אלה לשושון ולשמחה בקרוב ממש, בגאולה האמיתית והשלימה ע”י מישיח צדקנו, וישראל עוזה חיל.

בכבוד ובברכת הצלחה בכחן”ל.
מ. ש.

B”H. 15 Tammuz, month of redemption, 5734, Year of Hakhel —

Brooklyn, NY

[To quote] the term used by the [Friediker] Rebbe—To all those who hold our holy Torah dear, who observe the *mitzvos*, and even to those who are [merely] referred to as Jewish,

May Hashem bless you

Greetings and Blessings!

It is my heartfelt plea that you intensify your efforts, increasing in all of the *mitvzoim*, starting with Mivtza Mezuzah.

Begin this increase even before the Three Weeks—including on Shabbos, when we are permitted to orchestrate the needs of the public, [including] allocating tzedakah—whether material or spiritual [tzedakah. I.e., assisting fellow Jews with mitzvah observance].

May these days [of mourning] transform into gladness and joy very soon, with the true and complete redemption through our righteous Moshiach, and the Jewish people shall triumph.

With esteem and blessing for success in all of the above,

M. S.

Check Your Mezuzos

Chassidim immediately sprang into action. In addition to providing every Jewish home with a mezuzah, the Rebbe specifically instructed that even those homes that already have *mezuzos* should have them checked to ensure that they were kosher.

On the audio recording of the Farbrengen of Yud-Gimmel Tammuz 5736, a conversation between the Rebbe and a visiting *rav* can be heard between *sichos*:

The Rebbe said that he was asked a question:

Why was he insisting that all *mezuzos* should be checked, if according to halacha one must only check them once in seven years?

“I answered them,” the Rebbe explained, “that this halacha only applies if the mezuzah has a *chezkas kashrus*—if you could safely assume that it was kosher to begin with. However, nowadays, not only are we unsure whether the mezuzah is kosher or not, we can’t even be sure that there’s an actual mezuzah inside the case!

“I received a letter from a Yid who told me that he checked his mezuzah and found that one of them contained a scroll with the *pessukim* of *Birkas Kohanim*! Whoever wrote it obviously knew how to write, but he didn’t know that writing *Birkas Kohanim* does not make a mezuzah!”³

“It Would Be My Honor!”

An interesting moment took place a few weeks later, when the Rebbe was visited by the “Exceptional Soldiers” of the IDF, who were injured in battle. Towards the end of the *sicha*, the Rebbe told them:

“I would like to conclude, as Jews tend to do, with a request, and I’m certain you will accept it graciously:

“Given the recent terror incidents in Uganda and Istanbul, we must increase all measures of security in the physical sense, which is also connected with the spiritual means of security. My request therefore, is that when you get back to Eretz Yisroel, please ensure to check the *mezuzos* of your homes to see that they’re kosher.

“It would be my great honor if you would also accept a gift from my representatives in Eretz Yisroel on my behalf: If you leave your addresses here, you will be visited by my representatives in Eretz Yisroel upon



your return, and they will assist you with checking and affixing *mezuzos* on your homes..."⁴

Mezuzah and Moshiach

A mezuzah has the power to transform a house into a Jewish home, hearkening back to the words of the

possuk said about the Jewish midwives in Mitzrayim: "Vayaas lahem batim..."—and Hashem established houses for them. Rashi explains that the houses He established for them were "Houses of Kohanim, Levi'im, and kings"—ultimately resulting in the progeny of King Moshiach.

May he come speedily—*teikef umiyad mamash!*⁵

ALTRUISM ONLY?

In the following excerpts of an English letter dated 15 Sivan 5737, the Rebbe addresses someone who had asked if it was appropriate to emphasize the material benefits of fulfilling the mitzvah of mezuzah, as the Rebbe had done, in public and in private:

Referring to your remarks in regard to the presentation of the Mezuzah Campaign and similar activities, I must say, with all due respect, that I am surprised at your objections to pointing out the reward associated with the mezuzah in terms of protection, particularly the simile of a helmet, etc. For, precisely in the case of the mezuzah the reward in this world is emphasized many times in our sacred sources, and it has, moreover, the distinction of having its reward expressly formulated in the Shulchan

Aruch to wit:

וכל זההיר בה יאריכו ימי וימי בניו, ואם איןנו זהיר כו' (יוד רפ"ה, סס"א).

It is clear that the Shulchan Aruch speaks here of reward in this world, in the plain sense...

...I should like to add that this is the position of not only a believing Jew, but—subconsciously, and perhaps even consciously—it is the basic approach of every educator worthy of his vocation who teaches children (in age or knowledge) to develop moral attitudes and behavior—not on the merit of pure idealism alone, but also and largely on the basis of their pragmatic value. Most educators will not hesitate to advocate the virtues of honesty, justice, etc. for their immediate reward in terms of personal contentment and peace of mind, as well as for the good of the society in which to live...

EVERY JEWISH HOME



Interview with Interview with Rabbi Chaim Shaul Bruk

By: Rabbi Bentzion Pearson

The story of how I started our mezuzah campaign here in Montana begins with the passing of my paternal grandmother, Mrs. Chana Brook, in 5773.

At the time, we were the only shluchim in the whole state, so we were covering the length and breadth of the entire state. It was around that time that we recognized the importance of Mivtza Mezuzah and its special qualities over many of the other *mivtzoim*:

Firstly, it was one of the Rebbe's go-to answers on so many occasions. How many times did the Rebbe tell people asking for his brachos to check their tefillin and *mezuzos*? It's countless!

Secondly, in our state, the Jews are scattered over a vast area of land. We needed to find an easy mitzvah that could be implemented at scale, and mezuzah really fit the bill. It's fairly simple: You make a *bracha* and you put it on. You're not asking them for a major commitment like *taharas hamishpacha*, to send their kids to a Jewish day school, or even to fill their homes with *seforim*. It's a small, simple task with a great impact: They put a mezuzah on their door, and it brings

Hashem's blessings to their home, Divine protection, and much more.

The third point is something which I believe mezuzah is unique among all the Rebbe's *mivtzoim*: A mezuzah forces the Jew living in the home to be comfortable enough to identify with their Yiddishkeit, even outside their home. There's no better display of *Gaon Yaakov* than a beautiful mezuzah hanging proudly outside the front door.

Some of these people are living in a town where they're literally the only Jew. This is a reality for many, many towns in Montana, as far as we know.

As mentioned, this program started around the time that my grandmother passed away, so I approached a relative of ours and I asked him if he'd be the first sponsor of this project with a gift of \$5,000, allowing us to ensure that every Jewish home in Montana has a mezuzah on the front door.

We called this project the "Chana Brook Mezuzah Campaign," and we got to work. In those days we would regularly bring *bochurim*, five to six times a year, to visit the very remote areas of the state.



The results were incredible. The guys would go out, meet Jewish residents in their homes, and the one thing you could almost guarantee was that they would leave them with a mezuzah on their door. It created a connection to their Yiddishkeit and it often was the catalyst for more to follow.

In addition to the campaign itself, putting up hundreds and hundreds of *mezuzos*, we also ran the story in the local press in Montana. This was no simple feat. With a mezuzah campaign, there's a lot of explaining to do. It's not a program that every person easily connects with, like feeding the homeless.

Our state is 98% caucasian non-Jews who've had almost zero exposure to anything Jewish ever in their lifetimes. To explain to them that we're hanging a scroll over our doorposts took some work. But it was a great opportunity as well; a very educational

moment for the general population. And it made it not only into our state's newspapers, but it made it into the centerfold of USA Today, with a picture of us putting up a mezuzah in Helena, Montana.

The feedback we got from around the country was non-stop. From the northern peninsula of Michigan to parts of rural Georgia, we were sending *mezuzos* to Jews who wanted them. Obviously, if there were shluchim there, we connected them with their local shluchim. But if not, we sent them the *mezuzos* with instructions on how to put it up. We also made good use of a brochure published by The Shluchim Office about mezuzah.

We've been doing this now, with Hashem's help, more than a decade, and we're keeping at it. If a Jewish home does not have a mezuzah on the front door, we gift one to them

free of charge. If they want to donate, they're welcome to donate separately.

We now have another shliach in Bozeman whom we hired for the year, his name is Rabbi Mendel Backman. One of his main jobs is to visit homes, and the first thing he does is check if they have a mezuzah. If they don't, that's task number one.

Sometimes it takes time. You need to get them to be comfortable with the idea. There's a Jewish woman we know here in Montana who grew up in S. Diego as a daughter of Holocaust survivors. It took my wife and I eight years of conversations with her before she was comfortable putting up a mezuzah. For years, she was afraid of identifying herself as a Jew, having grown up with Holocaust survivors, potentially outing herself to a world that hates Jews. But eventually she put up a mezuzah. It was a beautiful milestone for her!

I've come to see the mezuzah as a unifying force for all Jews. We have far left anti-Israel Jews, formerly Orthodox Jews, and everything in between. A mezuzah on their door often turns out to be a great starting point for much more involvement in Yiddishkeit. Once their *ga'on Yaakov* is ignited, it has a trickle effect. And it's true from the other side as well: when a Jew is uncomfortable with who they are and afraid to publicly identify as a Jew, it can *chas v'shalom* go downhill from there.

One thing I'd like to add is that if they are indeed too afraid to place a mezuzah on their front door, especially today with the rise in antisemitism and all that, then start with one of the doors inside the home. Start with something. We can always keep building out from there. A word on funding:

Naturally, with all this media coverage, many shluchim reached out trying to understand how they could emulate the program in their places. Many asked me about how to fund this program, after all, a mezuzah



nowadays costs a minimum of \$65 to \$70 each.

However, the truth is that we received a lot of support from people who appreciated what we were doing. Frum, non-frum, and even non-Jewish friends wanted to participate in this spiritual revolution in our state. And when something is important, we always figure out how to fund it.

We're not talking here about millions of dollars. Yet, when it comes to millions of dollars of campaigns for buildings and other things, we manage to get it done. Yet when it comes to an actual mitzvah, one that could bring protection and *bracha*, Jewish identity and pride to homes, it should be a no-brainer.

Over the years, we've had more people step in to help sponsor this project. Every once in a while a Yid who lives in the S. Fernando Valley in California who sends us boxes of *mezuzos*. There's another Yid in Lakewood



who sends us *mezuzos*, and occasionally *tefillin*, to give out. And when there's no sponsor, we buy it on our own.

We've seen tremendous *hatzlacha* with this campaign, and the results are staggering. I don't profess to know why the Rebbe chose to focus on certain *mitzvos* over others, but the *mitzvah* of *mezuzah* is so basic and effective, it seems clear to me why it's so important for every Jewish home. It's an easy *mitzvah*, which connects the home and everyone living in it with Hashem, bringing his blessings, protection, and security, and it implants that sense of *ga'on Yaakov*.

People often ask me: What about putting up another Jewish symbol? Doesn't that also identify our house as a Jewish home?

I tell them that all these random symbols don't actually represent true Judaism. When it's an actual *mitzvah* from Hashem, you're really showing that you're a proud Jew who follows G-d's commandments. That's actually what it means to be a Jew!

I'd like to conclude with one more very important point. People ask me if this work is only applicable to *shluchim* or if other people can join as well.

Let me tell you: I grew up in a home where my father was in the jewelry business. Every time I'd come to my father's office, he was either putting on *tefillin* with the UPS driver or helping another Yid with a *mitzvah*.

As a matter of fact, that Jewish UPS driver was a descendant of the Schneerson family, and he had inherited a *yarmulke* that had belonged to the Tzemach Tzedek. We had the *zechus* that in 5749, my father bought that *yarmulke* from him, we all brought it to the Rebbe as a family.

I remember how every year around Pesach time, my father would send out packages of *shmurah matzah* along with Pesach guides published by Tzach to dozens of his business associates, whether customers, providers or

anyone else he knew, all over the country. He would mail out normally anywhere from 75 to 150 boxes of *matzah*.

I saw the same thing with my mother *a"h*. When she went to Lenox Hill Hospital for cancer treatment, she always brought *Shabbos candles* with her for the Jewish nurses and the Jewish women doctors. She always far-bredenged with them and tried to inspire them to increase their commitment to *Yiddishkeit*. This is ingrained in me since I was a child that as Lubavitchers, it's in our DNA; that's what we do.

It makes no difference if your primary occupation is in the capacity of an official *shlachman* or not. Helping a fellow Yid have a *mezuzah* on their door is a no-brainer. And by the way, as the Rebbe said many times, this is not just for *Chassidim*, not just Lubavitchers. Every single Yid knows fellow Jews who could use this assistance. It's our responsibility to be there for one another.

I have a friend in Monsey, for example, who is not a Lubavitcher by any stretch. But he calls me all the time asking for my advice about how to help all the secular Jewish colleagues in the company he works at. He made a Chanukah party for them and always tries to help them advance in their *Yiddishkeit*.

There are opportunities every day and we need to learn to capitalize on them. Every Jewish home in the world should have a kosher *mezuzah*. It's our job to help our fellow *Yidden* and start them on this journey. **T**

1. Motzei Shabbos Parshas Beshalach, 10 Shevat 5734; *Toras Menachem* vol. 75, p. 142.
2. *Likkutei Sichos* vol. 13, p. 211.
3. *Ashreinu.app*, 13 Tammuz 5736 *sicha* 5.
4. *Sichos Kodesh* 5736 vol. 2, p. 636.
5. *Toras Menachm* ibid., p. 148.

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